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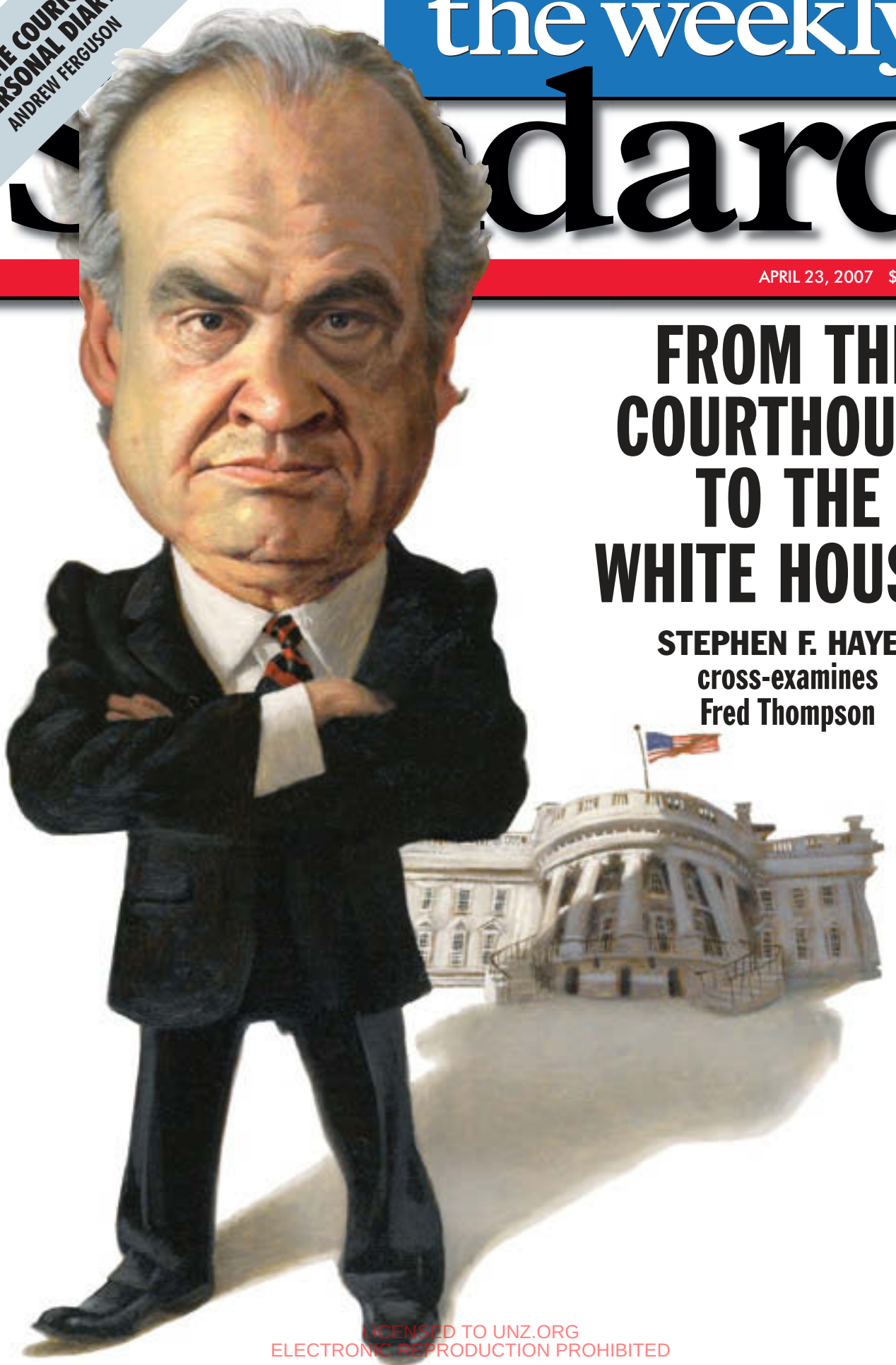
KATIE COURIC'S PERSONAL DIARY
ANDREW FERGUSON

FROM THE COURTHOUSE TO THE WHITE HOUSE?

STEPHEN F. HAYES cross-examines Fred Thompson



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#1 IN POLITICS
#1 VS. FOX NEWS & MSNBC
TUCKER, HARDBALL, CAVUTO, GIBSON*

THE ONE DECISION
BOTH PARTIES CAN AGREE ON

THE
SITUATION
ROOM

WITH
WOLF BLITZER

WEEKDAYS LIVE
4-6PMET & 7-8PMET

CNN = POLITICS

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In the new issue of the Hoover Digest . . .

Crossing to Safety in Latin America

Crime is robbing the region of talent, jobs, and its role in the global economy.

Criminal activity in Latin America is the bane of rich, middle class, and poor alike. It steals pesos from the shopkeeper and economic opportunities from the well educated. It makes neighborhoods unwalkable and diverts thousands of jobs into unproductive private security. Moreover, it feeds on itself. The police are often criminals themselves, easily corruptible and with no incentive to make things better.

Many people in the region are resigned to crime, as if it were inevitable in modern economies and societies. But the U.S. experience shows that to be false: when more criminals began to be caught and sent to prison, crime dropped. Latin American leaders can purge crooked cops and make sure new ones do the job they were hired for—while paying them well, to keep them away from bribery and other corrupt acts. It is also critical to improve earnings from and availability of legal jobs, especially for workers at the low end of the job spectrum. In the long run, a good education for young people from poor families would help most of all.

—Gary S. Becker

How to Turn Iran Upside Down

Tehran's weakened hard-liners yearn for a U.S. attack. Why oblige them?

The already tense U.S.-Iran relationship is now a tinderbox. The Islamic Republic trains and supports Hezbollah and Hamas; it provides aid and explosives to Iraqi Shiite militias who attack American soldiers; and, most alarming, it seems determined to develop a nuclear bomb. Bombing Iran, however, would not resolve any of these dangers—it would worsen them.

But where military strikes would fail, a different approach would succeed. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is neither the most powerful official in Iran nor beloved by the Iranian people. He has not delivered on his campaign pledges to fight corruption or improve the lot of the working classes and the poor. The authoritarian regime is not united behind Ahmadinejad, who knows there is only one thing that could bring the people back to him—a U.S. military attack. Rather than throw the reactionaries a lifeline, the United States should offer to negotiate unconditionally. Then, if Ahmadinejad says no, he would have to face a different foe: his own angry public.

—Abbas Milani, Larry Diamond, and Michael McFaul

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"Solidarity Forever, Pal!"

In the Don Imus vs. Al Sharpton celebrity tag-team cage match that obsessed Washington last week, and which ended with the radio jock's firing for racial insensitivity at the hands of his risk-averse CBS and MSNBC bosses, THE SCRAPBOOK has to confess that it couldn't work up a rooting interest either way. As *National Review*'s Rich Lowry noted in his syndicated column, the controversy over Imus's calling the Rutgers women's basketball team "nappy-headed hos" was "almost entirely a liberal conflagration." Which is to say, from our admittedly jaundiced point of view, it was a sort of pundits' version of the Iran-Iraq war.

With a few notable exceptions (John McCain, Rudy Giuliani), Imus's favorite interlocutors were a Who's Who of the Washington and New York liberal establishment: Evan Thomas, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Tim Russert, Chris Matthews, Tom Friedman, Frank Rich, Paul Begala, Howard Fineman, Tom Oliphant, Bob Schieffer, Jon Meacham, et al. Indeed, Oliphant—no one's idea of a man you'd take with you to a knife fight—had the misfortune, as Lowry put it, "to appear on Imus's show after the 'nappy-headed' comment and before it was clear that Imus was on his way to being expelled from polite company." So he made a great show of excusing Imus. But to be fair, Oliphant's parting remark might have been uttered by any of Imus's famous guests: "Solidarity forever, pal!" Or, until Al Sharpton says otherwise—whichever comes first.

Our normal instinct would have been to side with a man in Imus's position simply on the grounds that Sharpton led the charge against him. A slanderer and a race-baiter who has unrepentantly fomented deadly racial violence in New York on more than one occasion in the past 20 years, Sharpton doesn't have the moral standing of a cockroach to judge someone else's public discourse.

But good liberal that he is, Imus *volunteered* to appear with Sharpton and abase himself before this appallingly inappropriate arbiter. If CBS and MSNBC have now decided to outsource their Standards and Practices decisions to the velour sweat-suited demagogue—well, that too is something we can thank Imus for. So long, pal. ♦

Hopping Mad

At the very least, we'd like to think Karl Szmolinsky meant well. Back in November, the East German rabbit-breeder was approached by North Korean officials who asked if he would be interested in selling some of his rabbits to Pyongyang for breeding purposes. Aware of the acute shortage of food in the Hermit Kingdom, Szmolinsky obliged, handing over 12 of his rabbits for 80 euros each. That may seem an awful lot for a rabbit, but Szmolinsky's breed, known as "German gray giants," can each weigh up to 22 pounds (including 15 pounds of meat).

A feast fit for a tyrant?

The North Koreans then invited Szmolinsky to visit the rogue state in April to see how his rabbits were faring. But just before Easter, the 68-year-old pensioner was told by North Korean embassy officials that the trip was canceled. Szmolinsky now fears the worst, telling the London *Times*, "I don't think the animals are alive anymore, I think they've been eaten."

He suspects his rabbits, including his prized 23-pound male Robert, may have been the main course served during Kim Jong Il's birthday dinner last February. Said Szmolinsky: "North Korea won't be getting any more rabbits from me, they don't even need to bother asking." (The DPRK, on the other hand, maintains the rabbits are fine. And they deny ever contacting Szmolinsky.)

Not that any of this comes as a shock. After all, these rabbits are probably given more protein than the average North Korean. As Craig Whitlock of the *Washington Post* pondered, "How, exactly, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea [intended] to parlay the small herd of German Flopsies into hunger relief for its 23 million citizens is unclear." It seems clear to THE SCRAPBOOK, however, that Robert and his fellow lagomorphs were destined to become rabbit stew from the get-go. We just hope Szmolinsky and his fellow Germans don't fall for any of North Korea's other hare-brained schemes. ♦

Dannielynn's DNA

THE SCRAPBOOK is not ashamed to reveal that our fingernails came out the worse for wear the other morning when the paternity of the late Anna Nicole Smith's infant daughter, Dannielynn Hope Marshall Stern, was established in the Bahamas. Being the sentimental type, we had been rooting for the DNA of Ms. Smith's longtime "lawyer-companion," Howard K. Stern, who had been caring for the baby since birth. But like Stern, we reluctantly accepted the scientific conclusion that "Los Angeles photographer" Larry Birkhead—and not Stern, or bodyguard Alex Denk, or Prince Frederick von Anhalt, the current husband of Zsa Zsa Gabor, or any other claimants we've failed to mention—is the father.

The demise of Anna Nicole Smith, 39, and its attendant legal complications, have caused an unusual amount of brow-

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(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of February 26, 1996)

furrowing in the community of journalism. Cable TV, in particular, has been criticized for paying excessive attention to the life and death of the onetime model, *Playboy* Playmate of the Year, and widow of an 89-year-old billionaire, whose sheer cheesiness and relentless pursuit of publicity were uniquely impressive, even by contemporary standards. And, of course, the American people have been chastised in uncompromising terms for tuning in to the coverage, and for gawking at the train wreck that was Anna Nicole Smith's life.

To which THE SCRAPBOOK replies: Oh, please! In a world of armed conflict, carbon emissions, and Sen. Harry Reid, a little tabloid entertainment is therapeutic. And the Anna Nicole saga was a treasure trove of unimaginable riches: Her estranged mom from small-town Texas, her burial delayed by legal maneuvers, her weight gains and losses, the Bahamian authorities, her reality TV show, the overdose death of her son in the same hospital where Dannielynn was born, the weepy Florida judge from the Bronx, the growing list of putative fathers—it all would have seemed improbable in fiction.

And lest we forget, the public appetite for celebrity catastrophe is nothing new, nor is it exclusively American. A half-century ago Europeans avidly followed the adulterous romance of Ingrid Bergman and Roberto Rossellini, the Japanese remain transfixed by Michael Jackson, and Eva Perón's corpse is still venerated in Argentina. Our grandparents lapped up every detail of the Loeb-Leopold trial (1924), Tommy Manville (1894-1967) and his 11 wives, and the stabbing of gangster Johnny Stompanato by the daughter of his lover, Lana Turner (1958).

The only difference is that in those days public censure about scandal was directed at the protagonists, not the spectators or the middlemen in the press. Which, come to think of it, makes a certain sense. Since it is no longer permissible to be offended by the sort of behavior in which Smith specialized—serial promiscuity, nude modeling, marrying old codgers for their money—the onus now falls on innocent bystanders who can't resist a good spectacle. ♦

Poor Britain

First reported by Christopher Booker in the April 1 *Sunday Telegraph*, but apparently not an April Fool's joke, was the reaction by Tony Blair's health secretary, Patricia Hewitt, to the televised pictures of the British captives in Iran. Said Hewitt: "It was deplorable that the woman hostage should be shown smoking. This sends completely the wrong message to our young people."

Best rejoinder was from Chris Buckland in the *Sun*: "Apart from sounding plain daft, patronising Pat was also being politically incorrect probably for the first time in her life. Article 26, paragraph 3 of the Geneva Convention guarantees captives the right to use tobacco. So put that in your pipe and smoke it, Nanny Hewitt." ♦

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Casual

Gym Dandies

I'm at the gym jogging on a Life Fitness Treadmill and watching the Flying Kaminsky perform—there's no other way to describe it—his exercise routine. He's a short wiry guy who looks like he's in his late twenties, though he has a bald spot near the crown of his head. He has long orangutan arms that seem to go all the way down to his shins, and a pair of windshield-sized glasses with lenses that look bullet-proof. He's wearing a pair of Adidas track pants with two white stripes down each leg, a baggy navy blue T-shirt, and a pair of dark gray Adidas running shoes—your typical workout uniform.

I call him the Flying Kaminsky because he does his exercises as though he were performing acrobatics before an audience of hundreds at Circus Circus in Las Vegas. In the middle of otherwise standard moves, he does headstands, backflips, and spins. He has this whole elaborate repertoire of flamboyant gesticulations that are all ancillary to his actual workout.

For example, in between reps on the lat pulldown machine, the Flying Kaminsky stands up, grabs the chin bar with both hands, and—without lifting any actual weight—twists his torso from side to side while simultaneously lunging forward and back and moving his arms as if he were freestyle swimming. He does this with increasing velocity, until you start to fear he will lunge out of control and the chin bar will slip from his hands, unhook from the machine, soar across the gym, and collide with the pale, thin redhead doing pull-ups.

Whenever the Flying Kaminsky finishes a set on the leg press, he doesn't just slide into a sitting position, stand up, and move on to another exercise. Instead he lies there, stretches out his spindly orangutan arms to grab the back of the press on which his feet are resting, and lifts his entire body up, up, up—then jumps, suddenly vertical in mid-air, before landing on his feet beside the machine with a *thud!* that makes everyone look in his direction.

Anyway, I'm jogging, listening to Nelly Furtado warble about her promiscuity, and watching the Flying Kaminsky pirouette from the bicep curl to the hip abductor, and it occurs to me that, for all his elaborate working out, he's no superman. He's just a thin balding guy in glasses who will, all of a sudden, for no apparent reason, go into a headstand in the middle of a dozen bored young people doing bicycle curls.

Darren Gygi

Yet the Flying Kaminsky's place near the top of my gym's status pyramid is assured. He moves through the crowd unobstructed. He walks around like he owns the place. He has his choice of weight machines. When he does his squats and stretches, everyone makes way. Sure, maybe some do it out of concern for their personal safety, but they do it nonetheless. No one tells him to calm down and go through his routine like a typical somnambulist yuppie. Why would they? He's the Flying Kaminsky.

It's a reminder that gym-going in Washington is a strange business. In New York and Los Angeles, gyms are filled with beautiful people with unblemished skin and negative-20 percent body fat who bench-press hundreds of pounds while silently arranging themselves in perfect One-Legged-King-Pigeon yoga poses. In the temple of fitness, these are the high priests and priestesses. A novice, a typical pasty-faced schlub, as he goes about exercising quickly and unobtrusively, will avoid eye contact with the beautiful people, leaving the beauties undistracted. In the gyms in those cities it is clear who reigns supreme.

In Washington, however, nearly everyone is a pasty-faced schlub, so the normal gym hierarchy doesn't arise. A kind of anarchy prevails. The novices have overrun the temple. You can be as chubby as a Peter Paul Rubens subject or as flabby as a mobster on *The Sopranos* and still work out without shame. There's no one to make you feel awkward or out of place.

Instead of fitness high priests and priestesses, Washington has community-center charismatics. These are amateurs who lack the bodies of *Men's Health* and *Self* models but make up for it with zeal. In my gym alone there's the Elliptical Dervish, who is working the pedals and levers on his Life Fitness Elliptical Trainer so furiously he might as well be in religious ecstasy. There's the Treadmill Bobblehead, whose noggin is bouncing back and forth and side to side to the music on her iPod so relentlessly I feel a sudden need for a Tylenol.

And then there's the Flying Kaminsky, hanging upside-down from the abdominal board like a balding bat, performing inverted crunches—*up* and *down*, *up* and *down*—another acolyte in thrall to the god of health.

Matthew Continetti

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Galling Gallaudet

As a faculty member at Gallaudet University, I have struggled over the past year to explain the politics, background, and nuances of the events at Gallaudet to curious friends and colleagues. I generally do not agree with The Weekly Standard, but Charlotte Allen's "Identity Politics Gone Wild" (April 2) has explained the situation exceptionally well—both clearly and comprehensively. Ever since a colleague shared it with me, I have been sending it to people around the country. Needless to say, I do not agree with every word of Allen's analysis. There are, as well, some crucial aspects of the events, most notably the arguments about race and racism in the search, that she does not discuss, but no single article could contain everything. Most importantly, I was impressed by the quality of judgment and insight by someone outside the Gallaudet community. Allen is to be applauded.

Barry H. Bergen
Washington, D.C.

As a journalist working at CNN with friends who attended Gallaudet, I became aware of a lack of reputable information about the school and about Deaf Culture. That led me to start a website focused on news related to the deaf (*deafnewstoday.com*). Having closely followed the protests at Gallaudet, I was impressed with Charlotte Allen's analysis. While some of it misplaces emphasis and elevates radical opinions to an undeserved level of importance, she nevertheless provides an excellent review and well-stated summary of the identity issues facing the deaf community.

Stephen Goforth
Atlanta, Ga.

I am a Deaf college professor, who teaches English and American Sign Language. Charlotte Allen says that there are several sign languages in America. This is not true: American Sign Language is the *only* sign language in America. Other ways of communicating through signs, such as SEE 1, SEE 2, MCE, and so forth, are *codes* for the English language, much

like Morse code. Additionally, ASL has not been used in schools for the last three decades. Since the Milan Conference in Italy in 1880, ASL was banned in schools and oralism promoted as the only means to educate Deaf children. As a result, Deaf students' reading and writing abilities suffered. In the 21st century, this is finally changing with the return of bilingual education, which uses ASL to teach English and other subjects.

Alan Wilding
Taylorsville, Utah

Charlotte Allen responds: Alan Wilding introduces a pointless quibble: Sign language is sign language. How, for example, would Prof. Wilding define Plains Indian Sign Language? As for Wilding's remarks about "oralism" vs. ASL in schools, I refer readers to my article, wherein I note that Deaf activists (a category that clearly includes Wilding) have their own definition of "bilingual" education.

Much Ado About Alan

Abby Wisse Schachter begins her (friendly) review of my book, *A Match Made in Heaven*, with a good question—"Why did Israeli-American journalist Zev Chafets write a book about Jews and evangelicals?"—and a bizarre answer—"Two words: Alan Dershowitz."

The name Alan Dershowitz doesn't appear at all in my book for the simple reason that it has nothing at all to do with him. I have great respect for Prof. Dershowitz as an advocate for Israel, but I have no real knowledge of his opinions on the subject of Jews and evangelicals. In short, Prof. Dershowitz didn't inspire my book. I think, though, that he must have inspired Schachter in her review.

Zev Chafets
Pelham, N.Y.

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the weekly Standard

Fighting to Win

As Congress again takes up the issue of support for our troops fighting in Iraq, members should have the decency to take account of the successes those troops have fought for and achieved in recent weeks. Much of the support in the Democratic caucus for cutting off funds for Iraq comes from a conviction that the war is irretrievably lost. One could be excused for thinking that in the fall of 2006, when sectarian violence seemed to be cycling out of control against the backdrop of a wrong-headed U.S. strategy. But President Bush has adopted a new strategy, put in place a new command team, and provided new resources for the effort, and the situation has begun to improve. Failure remains possible, as it always does in war, but the possibility of victory has grown significantly. Prospects for success are brightest, moreover, in the struggle against al Qaeda—the challenge that many opponents of the war claim is America's only interest in Iraq. It would be the height of folly to cut off support for the war effort just as it is beginning to show glimmers of hope in a struggle central to the safety of all Americans.

There is no question that Iraq has become the central front for al Qaeda in the world today. Thousands of foreign fighters flow along recruiting networks that span the Muslim world and into Iraq to attack our soldiers and the Iraqi people. Most opponents of continuing the war admit that fighting these committed terrorists remains a national priority for America. Some argue that an American withdrawal would reduce Iraq's attractiveness to al Qaeda, reducing the number of terrorists and the threat they pose. Many believe that it is possible to fight al Qaeda using Special Forces and long-range missiles without engaging in the "civil war" they believe is still raging in Iraq. Neither proposition is true.

Al Qaeda fighters flow into Iraq because we are there, to be sure. But they do not confine themselves to fighting us. They also work to establish control over the Sunni regions in Iraq, to impose their version of Islam, and to terrorize and punish Iraqis who resist them in any way. When the Soviet Union left Afghanistan in abject defeat, the radical Islamists who had fought them did not lay down their guns. They undermined and destroyed the Afghan government and went on to seize power. Al Qaeda in Iraq aims for no less. They will not stop fighting when we leave; they will redouble their efforts to take control of the country.

We will not be able to resist this development simply by using targeted strikes either with Special Forces troops or long-range missiles. Al Qaeda's approach in Iraq is different from its approach in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) does not establish remote training camps; it mixes among the population. It does not remain aloof from the fighting between tribes and sects; it encourages and benefits from that fighting. It uses sectarian violence to drive Shiites out of mixed areas and terrorizes the Sunnis who are left into supporting it. We have seen this process at work in Diyala province and Baghdad. In Anbar, AQI used Sunni resentment at their community's loss of power in Iraq to create safe havens, but even there they found it necessary to unleash violence against Sunni hosts whom they found lacking in piety and commitment. Such problems cannot be resolved by Special Forces raids from over the horizon. They must be solved by convincing the Sunni and Shiite populations that we will help them fight and defeat AQI. That is precisely what has started to happen over the course of the past several months.

Al Qaeda's atrocities in Anbar have alienated a large and growing segment of the Sunni population there. A tribal confederation including two-thirds of the major tribes has formed to combat al Qaeda. The sheikhs of this confederation are sending their sons to join the local police formations, which six months ago could hardly find a single local recruit. Iraqi police in Anbar have fought valiantly even as al Qaeda has attempted to derail this effort with new and horrific attacks, including using chlorine gas bombs.

Nor is this process limited to Anbar. Across Iraq, Sunnis and Shiites are coming to recognize that al Qaeda is an enemy that is worse and more dangerous than any other, and that American and Iraqi government forces are their best potential allies. A new group of local Sunni leaders have begun to reach out to the central government, offering the hope that, with months of careful and patient negotiations, the Sunni insurgency that has festered since the invasion might begin to wind down. Iraq, lest we forget, is an ally in the war on terror—more Iraqis have died fighting al Qaeda than the soldiers and civilians of almost any other country. The Iraqi determination to continue that fight is strengthening. Now is hardly the time to end our support and abandon our Iraqi allies.

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Critics of the war also argue that the Sunni insurgency is no longer the central problem in Iraq, that sectarian violence has become the greatest and most intractable challenge. Sunni-Shiite hatred is centuries old, we are told, and American troops should not be put between hostile factions engaged in primordial violence that will spiral inevitably out of control. Facts on the ground do not support this conclusion. At the beginning of the current Baghdad Security Plan, both Moktada al-Sadr and Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, the leaders of the two dominant Shiite militias, ordered their followers to support the plan and stop conducting attacks against Sunnis. Sectarian attacks, also known as extra-judicial killings, dropped dramatically. In recent weeks they have risen somewhat as Sadr's militia, the Jaysh al-Mahdi, has begun to fragment and rogue elements have resumed their attacks. Even so, the levels remain below what they were before the Baghdad offensive began in February. This pattern is the opposite of the one we saw last year during Operations Together Forward I and II in Baghdad, when sectarian killings reached new peaks a few weeks after the start of those undertakings.

The fact that extra-judicial killings dropped when Sadr and Hakim ordered them to do so shows that the sectarian violence is not a reflection of primordial and unreasoning hatred, but rather a calculated use of force by particular individuals to advance their own agendas. If Iraqis really hated each other to the extent that an endless cycle of killing was inevitable, they would not so readily have followed the orders of their leaders.

Hurriya is a neighborhood in central Baghdad that was once mixed and is now predominantly Shiite. Jaysh al-Mahdi fighters have been working to drive out the remaining Sunni families. When new U.S. forces arrived in the neighborhood and established Joint Security Stations (JSS), they sent out word and a telephone number, asking for tips. In a story that became national news, a Sunni woman called that number and reported that three Shiite gunmen were attempting to drive her family out. American forces responded and captured two of the gunmen, but the third escaped and managed to kill the woman the next day. The story was prominently reported as evidence of the failure of the Baghdad Security Plan, with the added detail that her family left the area the next day. In truth, as the soldiers manning the Hurriya JSS told me in early April, the family left only to attend her funeral and is still living in its house. One would have expected the tip-line to dry up, of course, since the Mahdi Army had proven that it could punish informants. On the contrary. Tips to that unit have increased dramatically, and it is now receiving tips even from Shiites about IEDs that have been placed to kill U.S. soldiers, and about Mahdi Army efforts to terrorize Sunnis. Why? Because the Iraqis in Hurriya have had enough. They resent the fighters, Sunni or Shiite, who bring violence and death to their neighborhood. They want to help those, American or Iraqi, who can protect them and bring them peace.

The key to this change in attitude, which is not confined to Hurriya, but is spreading throughout Baghdad, lies in the establishment of trust between Iraqis and Americans. In the Hurriya JSS, Iraqi and American soldiers live together in a single building. They eat together, plan together, analyze intelligence and tips together, and fight together. The locals know that they are there, and know that they can respond quickly. They trust them, both Americans and Iraqis, to try to protect them from violence. This trust comes from the permanent presence of American forces in the neighborhood and from the belief that they will be there for a while. As any policeman can attest, trust is essential to getting good information about bad things happening in a neighborhood. It is as essential to fighting terrorism as it is to fighting crime. And it can happen only when American and Iraqi forces work together to protect the population they live among.

These initial positive signs are only that—indicators that things are finally moving in the right direction. The challenges that face the American and Iraqi effort to restore stability are still daunting. Questions remain about the ability or willingness of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and his cabinet to establish a government seen as legitimate by all Iraqis. Al Qaeda is certainly fighting hard, and the increase in spectacular attacks in recent weeks reflects a concerted AQI effort to restart the sectarian violence. It also reflects a desperate attempt to regain a foothold in Anbar and other Sunni areas that have turned against terrorism. The media report each suicide attack as a defeat for the United States, which is exactly how al Qaeda wishes these attacks to be perceived. But this enemy is so inhuman that it regards suicide bombers in the same way it regards mortar rounds or Katyusha rockets—just another weapon in its arsenal to be deployed as necessary. We do ourselves a disservice by giving such prominence to these attacks, gruesome as they are. All they really mean is that the enemy is fighting back, as enemies do.

Americans have gotten into a bad habit of believing that the outcome of every war is predictable—that wars are either short, decisive, and victorious, like Desert Storm, or long, painful, and futile, like Vietnam. The truth is that the outcome of most wars remains in doubt until they are very nearly over. Until late 1864, it looked as though the Union might well lose the Civil War. Within a year, Lincoln had triumphed. The conflict in Iraq is central to our foreign policy, indeed to our well-being. Surely we must keep fighting to win as long as victory remains possible. And it is possible, although not certain, that we will win in Iraq. Right now, the signs are more hopeful than they have been in many months. It would be a tragedy for America and for Iraq to abandon the fight just as the possibility of success began to emerge.

—Frederick W. Kagan, for the Editors

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Putting Words in Her Mouth

Katie Couric remembers somebody else's first library card. BY ANDREW FERGUSON

Not long after I came to Washington to work as a junior editorial flunky, I went to a cocktail party at a think tank. (Attending cocktail parties at think tanks, I thought then, was one of the great perks of my job, which tells you all you need to know about the life of a junior editorial flunky.) There I met a fellow flunky—a flunkiette, you might call her, since she was even greener than I was, and much, much blonder. Her thankless job was to write speeches, op-eds, position papers, and other encyclicals under the name of the think tank's president. She was a ghost, in other words. A flunkiette ghost.

Comparing notes, we both mentioned our admiration for the wit, prose style, and intellectual range of a well-known newspaper columnist.

"He's the best," I said.

"Fabulous," she agreed.

Then, after a brief pause and a puzzled look, she said: "I wonder who writes his stuff."

That was 20 years ago, and when it comes to famous journalists, especially of the TV variety, the question haunts us still. Just last week a spokesman for CBS News revealed that an episode of "Katie Couric's Notebook," a one-minute video commentary distributed daily to CBS affiliates and posted on the CBS website, "was based on" a column by Jeffrey Zaslow that had appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*. "Was based on" is a euphemism used by TV people meaning "was stolen from." According to the spokesman, Katie "was horrified" to discover that the words that had come out of her mouth and had been published under her name were in fact the work of someone else.

Katie Couric

No, wait—that can't be right. When she spoke and published the words, Katie had to know they weren't her own. When the words came out of her mouth, she thought they were the work of someone she had hired to put them there. In TV this someone is called a "producer," and several of them—very young, by all accounts, and most of them women—work at writing the commentaries that Katie presents as her "Notebook."

They are weightless little leaves, these commentaries. From the standard opening (*Hi, everyone!*) to the standard close (*That's a page from my notebook*), each runs to 160 words. As frontman for a corporate behemoth that relies for its revenue on the goodwill, or at least the toleration, of the vast, various, and extremely touchy American public, Katie can never express an opinion that might inspire someone to object. This lends her Notebook an anodyne quality. The subject matter ranges widely, but the treatment is uniformly mild. If, for example, the topic is teen promiscuity or the severely obese ("it's a growing problem, and the ones who are growing are us!" Katie opined), she views it with alarm, but the alarm is muted; if it's Al Gore's crusade against global warming, she lends her support, though with no particulars; if the subject is war and humanity's inclination to violence, she casts her eyes heavenward and wonders when, please God, it will all end. Not that she mentions God, or casts her eyes heavenward.

Often the commentaries come graced with a personal touch, that special Couric *je ne sais quoi*. Shuddering over the subject of sexual promiscuity, she told us: "I want my daughters to find real love when they're ready, and respect their bodies. My girls and I are going to have a little chat tonight . . . again." The plagiarized commentary, which was taken from a column by Zaslow about libraries, began: "I still remember when I got my first library card, browsing through the stacks for my favorite books." Yes indeed: The writerly life often begins in those stacks. Good times.

So you can't help but wonder, given the occasional personal gloss

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Illustration by Earl Keleny

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and their untaxing nature, why Katie felt it necessary to hire a staff to write the commentaries for her. The usual answer is that journalists like Katie are simply too busy to write. Though ghostwriting itself is at least as old as Cyrano de Bergerac, its appearance in the journalism trade is relatively recent. Dan Rather, who used to be as busy as Katie, would often go on and on about how television was a "writer's medium" and how "good writing" was essential to his "craft," and he put his money where his mouth was by hiring a bunch of writers to do his good writing for him. The TV journalist Tim Russert is not only enormously busy, he's a sentimental old poop. His love for his dad is so impossible to contain that he was moved to hire a ghostwriter—an expensive one, too, William Novak, author of the seminal *Iacocca*—to write about how much he loves his dad. I mean how much he, Tim, loves his dad. The first-person account was titled *Big Russ and Me*. Again, the Me in the title was supposed to be Tim, not Novak.

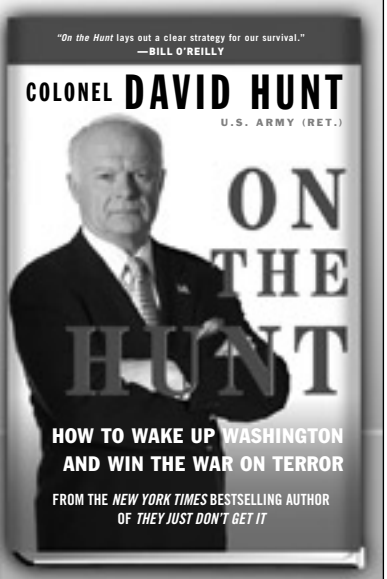
You can see how complicated ghostwriting can get to be, at least for some of us in the audience. It's almost postmodern in its dizziness, especially when it's used by people, such as journalists, who are themselves assumed to be professional writing folk. When, for instance, Katie peered into the camera with her sincerest gaze (though she was really peering into the teleprompter) and deplored teen promiscuity, was it Katie doing the deploring, or was it the ghost? Was it Katie's opinion, or the ghostwriter's opinion? When she said, "I'm going to have a talk with my girls tonight," did she, Katie, mean that she, Katie, was going to have a talk with Katie's girls, or did she, the ghostwriter, mean that she, the ghostwriter, was going to have a talk with Katie's girls, or maybe that she'd have a talk with her own, the ghostwriter's, girls? As the complications ramify, funhouse-fashion, the reader or viewer is tempted to strip away the complications altogether and simply assume that the whole commentary is a sham. It's entirely possible that, no matter what her Notebook says, Katie isn't really going to talk with her daughters about promiscuity tonight. It's entirely possible that Katie doesn't have any kids at all.

Among ghosts the cynicism must be even more thoroughgoing, and even less avoidable. Certainly it had Katie's poor plagiarizing producer in its grip, just as, in much milder form, it had gripped my flunkiette acquaintance 20 years ago. Of course there's never an excuse for plagiarism—the original writerly sin—but you can't help but see how odd the situation was that the ghostwriter found herself in, and from which she tried to escape through such extreme measures. She must have realized that in any ghost-employer relationship, someone is already and always a plagiarist. The distance from being a ghost to being a thief of words and ideas—or the distance from pretending other people's words are your own to actually stealing them—is not so great.

Or so it must have seemed to the budding writer/producer. A person becomes a writer from many motives, but chief among them is the desire for self-expression; to uncover your innermost thoughts, to clear away the underbrush and find what you really think, and then to put those thoughts onto paper (or the computer screen) in as appealing a form as you can devise. But this young ghost faced an even tougher task. She spent her days trying somehow to divine—or, failing that, to invent—the innermost thoughts of the remote, hugely famous, unfathomably wealthy woman who was her boss, and who will forever remain a stranger to her. Having been asked to steal Katie Couric's thoughts, assuming there are such, the ghost inched a bit further and stole Jeff Zaslow's instead. Then she passed Zaslow's thoughts off as—well, not her own, but as Katie's. What her own thoughts were, she probably no longer knew.

As a writer she'd been reduced to the role of middleman, merely the fence in an already tawdry transaction. And like all middlemen, she was easily replaced. ♦

Find out what it's *really* going to take to win the War on Terror.



An acclaimed Fox News military analyst, David Hunt earned his stripes with 29 years in the U.S. Army and extensive experience in counterterrorism, special operations and intelligence operations. Now he's laying it all on the line with a book that strikes at the heart of America's War on Terror—with blunt talk on what's wrong, what we have to do, and exactly how we have to do it.

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A McCain Surge?

Defending the Iraq war is his best shot.

BY FRED BARNES

Senator John McCain's speech last week on winning in Iraq earned high marks, at least from conservatives. One result was an immediate fourfold increase in McCain's online fundraising, though he'd made no special appeal. Another was that his once close ties to the mainstream media continued to fray, which may improve his standing among conservatives. And at the same time his chief opponents for the Republican presidential nomination hit bumps in the road: Rudy Giuliani over his support for taxpayer-funded abortions, Mitt Romney because of his seemingly innocent but exaggerated claim to have been a lifelong hunter.

Even taken together, these haven't created a McCain moment in the Republican campaign. But they do mark the end of the downward drift of his candidacy and improve his prospects of gaining the support of conservatives—the two things McCain needed most.

We know what a full-blown McCain moment looks like. We saw it in New Hampshire in 2000 when he drew large and adoring crowds, gained more than 20 percentage points in a matter of days, and roared past George W. Bush to win the New Hampshire primary. Nothing like that is happening now. But McCain has steadied his campaign at a time when his foes are stumbling. And his future in the Republican race looks brighter than it has in months.

McCain's Iraq speech drew enormous attention because it followed his highly publicized trip to Baghdad and Anbar province, Iraq's major trouble spots. The speech included what for McCain was unusually cutting criticism of Democrats. "Democratic leaders smiled and cheered as the last votes were counted" to impose a timetable for troop withdrawals from Iraq, he said. "What were they celebrating? Defeat? Surrender?"

Now, by keeping a relentless focus on Iraq, McCain has a chance to do something more significant than criticize Democrats. He can change how the war in Iraq is being perceived here at home. President Bush has tried to do this but hasn't come close to pulling it off.

The current narrative, insisted on by Democrats and echoed in the media, encourages opposition to the war and could, if it lingers into 2008, doom McCain's presidential bid. It goes like this: The war in Iraq is all but lost as Bush pursues the same hopeless strategy he has for four years, the only difference now being his deployment of more troops. McCain's role in this narrative is that he's backing Bush, partly for crass political reasons.

To say this storyline is outdated, wrongheaded, and defeatist is putting it mildly. But it's had staying power. In sharp contrast, a more honest narrative—the McCain narrative—goes like this: Thanks to a new strategy of counterinsurgency led by General David Petraeus and more combat troops, we now have a chance to win in Iraq. Success isn't guaranteed, but the stumbles and setbacks of the past should not distract us from what is being achieved now.

In his speech last week, McCain punctuated this point with a story about a Navy SEAL, shot in the eye in Iraq, whom he encountered in a military hospital in Germany. The sailor asked McCain to visit him. "When I entered his room and approached his bedside, he struggled with great difficulty to sit up, stiffened his body as if he were trying to stand at attention, grasped my hand tightly and wouldn't let go," McCain said. "And then he whispered to me not to worry [and said], 'We can win this fight. We can win this fight.'"

Democrats refuse to debate the possibility of victory. No Democrat has stepped forward to explain why the new strategy, bolstered by the "surge" of fresh troops, has come too late in Iraq and why it's bound to fail. They don't want to concede that success in Iraq is even arguable.

There's a very telling poll question, often cited by McCain, that touches on this. Asked in February by Public Opinion Strategies if they "support finishing the job in Iraq, that is, keeping the troops there until the Iraqi government can maintain control and provide security for its people," the public goes along by 57 percent to 41 percent. A positive note like that is, of course, the last thing Democrats want to hear. A lost war, prolonged by Bush, with American troops still suffering casualties—they think that's their best issue and their hope for winning the White House and keeping control of Congress in 2008.

Right now, Bush needs McCain to keep pressing the argument for victory in Iraq. Come 2008, McCain is going to need something from Bush. When a president finishes his second term on a low note—as Truman, Eisenhower, Johnson, and Clinton did—the nominee of his party tends to lose the next presidential election. So McCain needs Bush to leave office having achieved some success in Iraq and thus having gained in popularity. Bush's approval rating, by the way, rose from 34 percent to 38 percent in a Gallup poll last week.

It makes no sense for McCain to

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emphasize his differences with the president today. The press is bent on goading McCain into doing this, but it's simply not in his political interest. For one thing, Bush remains reasonably popular among the Republicans who will choose the 2008 nominee. And McCain should be eager to bolster Bush so he can depart the White House with a strong finishing kick.

McCain has made himself a better candidate by embracing the Iraq war as the centerpiece of his campaign. No one doubts his sincerity or his commitment to the war. The day after his Iraq speech, McCain visited Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at the White House. But he spent just as much time that day with Petty Officer First Class Mark Robbins at the naval hospital in Bethesda outside Washington. Robbins is the wounded Navy SEAL he'd first met in Germany. ♦

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What Putin Stands For

Planes, uranium, tanks, infrastructure, and nuclear power for sale. BY REUBEN F. JOHNSON

Kiev

A popular joke about Russian president Vladimir Putin these days—like most humor in this part of the world—contains more than a little truth. Putin is sitting in his office and the phone rings. The caller introduces himself as the Moscow representative for Coca-Cola. He congratulates Putin on having brought back the inspiring music of the old Soviet national anthem, but with new lyrics penned to celebrate the "reborn, strong Russia."

"The old Soviet music with these new lyrics," says the Coca-Cola executive, "reminds all of the people what was good about the Soviet times plus what they have to be proud of now as Russians. It instills a sense of patriotism that the previous hymn adopted under Boris Yeltsin [for which no lyrics were ever written] did not. In the same vein as this decision we have a commercial proposal for you."

"We propose that you ditch the red, blue, and white vertical-tricolor Russian flag and replace it with the old Soviet flag," he says. "Only with one small difference. If you will place a small Coca-Cola logo in white on the flag's red background in the bottom right-hand corner our company is ready to finance your entire election campaign. That is, whenever you decide how you will change the Russian constitution so you can run for a third term."

"That is an interesting proposal," answers the Russian president, "but I will have to consult with my advisers before accepting." Putin then hangs up and summons his chief of staff and prime minister.

"Comrades, we have *another* proposal about changing the flag," he tells them, "but this one is quite a bit more attractive, and I think we should consider it. But first, tell me—how much time do we have left on the current flag contract with Aquafresh toothpaste?"

There are two truths in this joke: One—under Putin, the personal financial interests of the state apparatchiki have become completely inbred with the national interest. The entirety of state-owned and controlled enterprises are run by and for the benefit of the cabal around Putin—a collection of former KGB colleagues, St. Petersburg lawyers, and other political cronies. This band of comrades has managed to place all of the large money-making industries under their control—so much so that the thought of losing their grip when the Russian president's second term ends next year is a source of rising anxiety for his inner circle.

The second truth is that the idea of a Putin third term is less of a joke with each passing day. The possibility has been talked about incessantly within political circles as well as on the street—and most Russians have assumed that some form of parliamentary chicanery would eventually be invoked in order to make it a reality. But there have been no official steps proposed along these lines.

That is, until late afternoon on the last Friday in March, when Sergei Mironov, speaker of the Federation Council (the Russian parliament's upper chamber), called for the Russian constitution to be amended to allow

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ITAR-TASS / Corbis / Astakhov Dmitri

Putin and Sergei Ivanov at Russian military intelligence headquarters, November 8, 2006

Putin to remain in office beyond the end of his second term.

The Kremlin immediately reiterated Putin's stated position opposing such an amendment. But the call for a "presidency without an end" by Mironov—the most senior official to make the suggestion—shows that panic is beginning to set in among those who will lose power and influence when Putin leaves.

Garry Kasparov, the former Russian chess master and a Putin opponent, called a press conference in response to Mironov's proposal, which he characterized as "hysterical weeping" by those in Putin's entourage who are afraid of losing their positions (along with the luxury apartments, BMW sedans, and other perks). "They understand that Putin will not stay on, but they do not know what to do next," he told the assembled Moscow press corps.

But it is not just a comfy lifestyle and other privileges that could come crashing down once Putin exits the presidency. What is at stake is a multibillion dollar business empire.

A year ago, the *New York Times* Moscow bureau produced an article entitled "Workers' Paradise Is Rebranded as Kremlin, Inc." that described how the presidential apparatus under Putin had taken control of virtually all of the nation's industrial wealth. But the *Times* does not know the half of it.

The Kremlin's control over the state-run natural gas monopoly Gazprom, Putin's breakup and seizure of the oil company Yukos, and the expropriation of other valuable natural resource operations (namely, the regulatory sleight-of-hand that was used to hijack the Western-financed Sakhalin-2 oil and gas exploration project) have been well publicized in the West. But another Kremlin monopoly is even more ominous.

Since the end of the Soviet era, arms sales abroad have been controlled by state-owned companies—the number and names of which depended on which direction the pendulum was swinging from month to month. At times it was decided that having only one monopoly arms export company was the best option; at other junctures there were as many as three companies, because the politics of the day deemed competition to be healthy for the Russian defense industry. This back and forth process—as well as the numerous names by which these companies have been called—resembles an Old Testament family tree more than it does a Western-style history of corporate mergers and rebranding.

Several Russian defense enterprises have also held export licenses that allowed them to sell abroad without the involvement of the state arms export apparatus. One such firm was the Russian Aircraft Building Corporation MiG. The famous planemaker having its own license was deemed a sensible arrangement. With the number of MiG aircraft that had been sold abroad in the last three decades and the infrastructure that the company had established around the world for sales and service, there would be little to no value added by inserting a state-run entity as a middleman.

This all began to change when Putin became president and appointed two KGB cronies he has known since their days of serving together in the former Soviet vassal state of East Germany, Andrei Belyaninov and Sergei Chemezov, to take over Rosoboronexport (ROE), the Russian government's arms export agency.

As of March 1, 2007, ROE has consolidated control over all arms sales by Russian companies. MiG and other defense enterprises who had been operating on their own have had their export licenses liquidated. All contracts—and sales commissions—will flow solely through Chemezov, ROE's general director. The export process is also closely watched by Belyaninov, who was appointed by Putin to be the head of the state customs service. (This is the same customs service that allowed several million dollars worth of Polonium-210 to be carried on British Airways flights to London in order to poison former KGB officer-turned-defector Alexander Litvinenko.)

Another close KGB colleague of Putin's, Sergei Ivanov, was defense minister until this February. Earlier this year he was also named CEO of the new Unified Aircraft Building Corporation, an amalgamation of all the formerly separate Russian aircraft design bureaus and associated production plants into one mammoth conglomerate. No one has yet explained how one can simultaneously be head of a ministry and the head of a company that supplies that same ministry with all of its military aircraft without some significant conflicts of interest. (Of course, if the motto of both is "*enrichissez-vous*," then perhaps there is no conflict.)

Ivanov has now been kicked upstairs to the office of first deputy prime minister and has lost the defense portfolio, but he remains the head of the Military-Industrial Commission—formed just last year—which oversees the production of arms for export. Ivanov's replacement as defense minister, Anatoly Serdyukov, is a former furniture store manager turned tax

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service official who—it has just been announced—will be sent for a month-long crash course in national security at the Russian armed forces General Staff Academy.

All of this is a sign that what really matters to the comrades in arms around Putin is to keep the multi-billion-dollar weapons-export deals humming. Small wonder that after Ivanov and the Russian president made consecutive trips to India earlier this year, a New Delhi columnist wrote that Putin is an acronym that stands for "Planes, Uranium, Tanks, Infrastructure and Nuclear power."

Keeping arms plants pumping out weapons for export to China, India, and Venezuela is now the Russian government's top priority—more important even than the smooth functioning of the Ministry of Defense. It is also what drives the movement to make Putin president for life or to ensure that he can hand-pick his successor. The KGB-St. Petersburg social club that now has a monopoly on power in Moscow (and effectively silences those who oppose them) wants to expand the sale of Russian arms to anyone and everyone who wants them.

This may eventually provoke a reaction from Washington. The pile of Russian weapons sent to Hugo Chávez—$3 billion of Sukhoi Su-30MK2 or Su-35 fighter aircraft, Mil Mi-35 attack helicopters, Mil Mi-17 and Mi-26 helicopters, Kalashnikov AK-47 assault rifles, and other goodies—should be of at least minor interest to anyone concerned with U.S. national security.

And then there's Iran. To get Moscow to sign on to the recent Security Council resolution clamping new sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program, the Russian contingent demanded one item be deleted from the sanctions list. Tellingly, it was the proposed ban on all arms exports to Iran. Moscow wants Tehran as its next major weapons customer. Today Chávez, tomorrow Ahmadinejad. Putin's comrades in arms are determined to keep the money flowing in—regardless of what it means for the rest of us. ♦

Mitch-Slapping the Democrats

Leading the opposition comes naturally to McConnell. BY FRED LUCAS

Mitch McConnell's will to win, developed at an early age, fell short when as president of the Student Bar Association at the University of Kentucky law school he failed in his effort to institute a student honor code. It was a major defeat in his early political life. "I laid my prestige on the line and lost," says McConnell, sitting cross-legged under a chandelier in the Republican leadership office, shortly after debating a spending bill on the Senate floor. "It's an example of a leader getting out in front of his constituents too far and not bringing them along." The lesson was learned: "You can't lead if you don't have any followers."

Whether voters or other senators, the new minority leader has succeeded in amassing followers—and a lot of political cash, reportedly some $220 million over his Senate career. Together these have been key to his success, both in building up the Republican party in Kentucky, and now in holding the Republican caucus together when it counts—as when the Republicans stopped a vote on a Democratic antiwar resolution in February.

A masterful strategist, McConnell doesn't rely on charisma or good looks. He speaks in a subdued voice and his handshake isn't the firmest. Nor does he cultivate the tough guy image of a Lyndon Johnson or Tom DeLay. Republican colleagues describe him as a good listener and consensus builder, both in the role of Senate majority whip from 2003 to 2007 and now as minority leader.

"He's long headed," said Utah conservative Bob Bennett. "A charismatic leader is like someone in the movies who bursts on to the scene and in the next reel he's in charge. [McConnell's] not cut out for the movies. He thinks four or five or six moves ahead and takes that first step to set up the sixth move."

Republican caucus meetings are much briefer under McConnell than they were under Bill Frist and Trent Lott, Bennett said, as McConnell tends to cut to the heart of a matter. Gordon Smith of Oregon—a moderate who's been on the opposite side of an issue from McConnell, having joined Chuck Hagel in siding with Democrats on a timeline for leaving Iraq—attests the leader is a good whip on almost every occasion.

"He understands that each state is different and the needs of the folks there are different, and at the end of the day he gets the numbers to win," said Smith, who nominated McConnell for the leadership role.

In his nomination speech, Smith talked about McConnell's drive to overcome obstacles going back to a childhood battle with polio. At the age of two, he was treated at the clinic in Warm Springs, Georgia, founded by Franklin D. Roosevelt. His earliest memory is of his last visit there.

When he was released, he could walk, but doctors feared that putting pressure on the left leg would cause abnormal growth, so they instructed his mother to keep him off his feet until he was four, while she administered physical therapy three times a day.

"She must have watched me like a hawk—all day, every day," McConnell reflects. "There have been a lot

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of things written about how formative the first five years in life are. I've always felt that experience probably had a big impact on my feeling, which is that only those people in life are defeated who give up."

McConnell would eventually become student body president at the University of Louisville, then student bar president at the University of Kentucky law school—ending up nicely positioned to curry favor with both Cardinal and Wildcat fans in his sports heavy state.

After interning for his hero, Kentucky senator John Sherman Cooper—an experience that crystallized his own ambition to serve in the Senate—and serving in the Ford Justice Department, McConnell went home and got himself elected Jefferson County judge-executive. At the time, it was the highest political office in Louisville, the only truly liberal part of Kentucky.

He served in the post from 1978 through 1984, when he entered a longshot contest against popular Democratic senator Dee Huddleston. He released the famous "Where's Dee?" ad featuring a pack of bloodhounds hunting for the incumbent, known for missing votes. McConnell was the only Republican in the country that year to beat an incumbent Democratic senator (by a hair), in part because Ronald Reagan carried Kentucky by 21 points.

But Kentucky was still a Democratic state: The governor, both houses of the legislature, five of seven U.S. House members, and the senior senator were all Democrats and had been for over two decades. McConnell had to be clever.

It was in 1994, when Rep. William Natcher, beloved elder statesman and a Democrat, died, that McConnell showed what he could do. Two unknowns were battling in a special election, and McConnell was determined to make the race a referendum on President Clinton. This was the impetus for an ad that showed Democratic candidate Joe Prather's face morphing into Clinton's face. His opponent, an unknown Christian book store owner named Ron Lewis, pulled off what was called a miracle in the predominantly Democratic but socially conservative district.

McConnell went on to help get Jim Bunning elected to the U.S. Senate in 1998. The next year, he invited a Democratic state senator to his living room and persuaded him to switch parties, thus shifting the majority in one house of the legislature. Perhaps his crowning achievement as a kingmaker came in 2003 when his handpicked candidate, congressman Ernie Fletcher, became the first Republican to win a Kentucky governor's race since 1967.

"He single-handedly built the contemporary Republican party" in Kentucky, says Donald Gross, a political science professor at the University of Kentucky, who notes he disagrees with the senator on virtually everything. "He brought the party together from its factions and splits by using leverage from his fundraising. He gains coordination and cooperation by using money to buy things."

Many Kentucky Democrats view McConnell as an old style machine pol driven by money and special interests and responsible for the worst attack ads, both in his own campaigns and in those he controls like a puppet master.

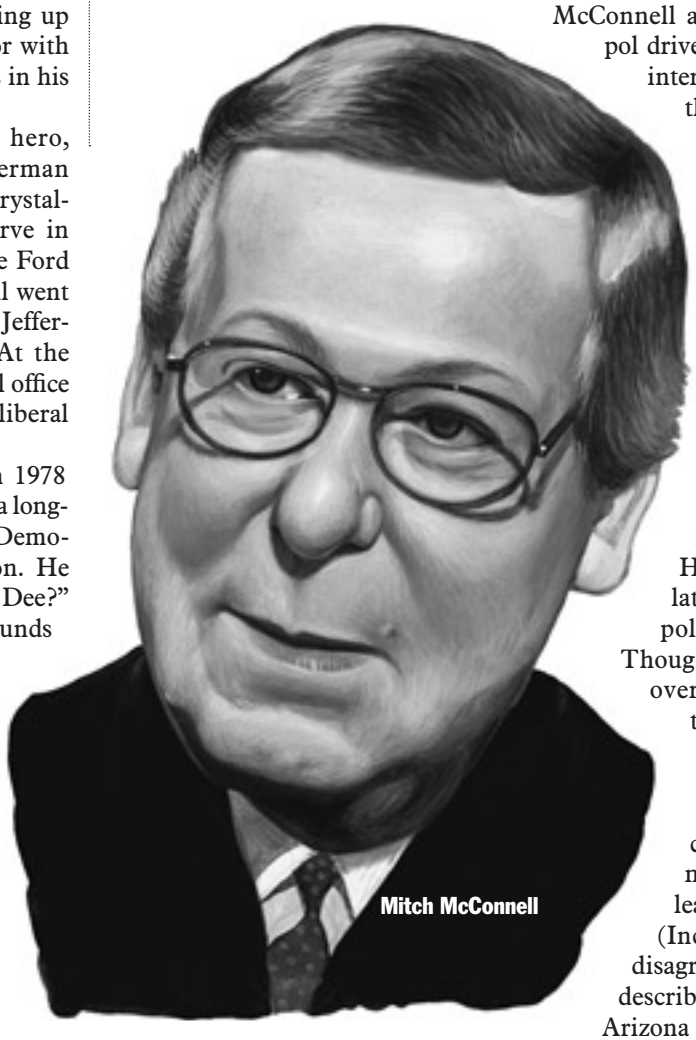
Mitch McConnell

Illustration by Earl Keleney

But McConnell is proud to be a money man, once called the "Darth Vader" of campaign finance reform. He blocked the McCain-Feingold bill for nearly a decade before it was finally enacted. He argued, more articulately than anyone, that in politics money is speech. Though he lost the lawsuit to overturn the law in 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court is now ready to take another look at campaign rules in a Wisconsin case, and McConnell expects to take a leading role in the matter. (Incidentally, despite their disagreement on this issue, he describes his relationship with Arizona senator John McCain as "excellent.")

As for the charge about negative campaigns, McConnell's attack ads may be no nastier than average, just more effective because they're funny. The 1984 hounds were memorable, as was a 1996 ad that showed a flock of sheep, with the warning "Don't be Be-sheared," a reference to his Democratic opponent Steve Beshear's support for tax increases.

McConnell compensates for his lack of charisma with wit, usually

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delivering the best lines at Kentucky's annual Fancy Farm picnic, a raucous political event filled with fiery speeches, heckling crowds, and assorted gimmicks. He won his seat by landslides in 1996 and 2002.

Now, though, Democrats are hoping the national mood could make McConnell vulnerable. A lefty antiwar group, Americans United for Change, announced spending $200,000 for ads starting in late March attacking McConnell's support for Bush and the war.

Critics also lampoon McConnell for having his name on no major piece of legislation, though they ignore his co-authorship with Chris Dodd of the Help America Vote Act. But McConnell has said he's just as happy to block bad legislation as to sponsor good—as befits a conservative lawmaker and, now, minority leader.

As leader, McConnell said his top priorities would be Social Security reform and comprehensive immigration reform. He has high hopes that the Democratic majority will be receptive.

"Some issues just lend themselves to being handled by divided government," he said, citing President Reagan and House Speaker Tip O'Neill's rescue of Social Security, and President Clinton and the Republican Congress's welfare reform in the 1990s. "The perfect time to tackle these two big issues in the country is right now."

Immigration will be easier, he said. But Social Security reform—which almost no Democrats supported in 2005—could be a tough sell. McConnell intends to bring people along by appealing to their political self-interest.

"Why in the world would the Democrats do it?" he asked of Social Security reform. "I'll tell you why they ought to do it: Two years from now they hope they have the White House, and they hope they still have the Senate and the House. If they do, the problems will be two years worse, and they will have the same amount of Republican cooperation as we did Democratic cooperation." ♦

O Brotherhood, What Art Thou?

Don't mistake Islamic extremists for moderates.

BY ZEYNO BARAN

Even though Congress was in recess the first week of April, a number of lawmakers kept busy. A bipartisan delegation led by House majority leader Steny Hoyer paid a visit to Cairo, meeting with several Egyptian members of parliament, including members of the Muslim Brotherhood, a controversial Islamist group officially banned in Egypt. Hoyer's contacts with the Brotherhood have added new intensity to the debate over whether or not the U.S. government should "engage" with the group as an ally in the war on terror.

Making the case for such engagement, Robert Leiken and Steven Brooke wrote an article in the March/April issue of *Foreign Affairs* entitled "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood." They conclude that the Brotherhood consists of "moderate Muslims with active community support" and that engaging with its members "makes strong strategic sense."

Yet this could not be further from the truth. The argument for a strategy of engagement flows from the incorrect belief that if Islamist groups that denounce violence are strengthened, they will then confront their more violent brethren and rob them of their support base. Although various Islamist groups do quarrel over tactics and often bear considerable animosity towards one another, a "divide and conquer" strategy will only push them closer together. This is illustrated perfectly by the response to Prime Minister Tony Blair's decision to ban the revolutionary Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) after the July 7, 2005, bombings in London. HT reached out to various British Islamist organizations, including the Muslim Brotherhood (despite their intense historical rivalry), and urged them all to stand united or "be the next in line to be proscribed." Sadly, HT's effort was successful and Blair was forced to withdraw his proposal.

Allies in this war cannot be chosen on the basis of their tactics—that is, whether or not they eschew violent methods. Instead, the deciding factor must be ideology: Is the group Islamist or not? In essence, this means that a nonviolent, British-born Islamist should not be considered an ally. Yet a devout, conservative Muslim immigrant to Europe—one who does not even speak any Western languages but rejects Islamist ideology—could be.

Moderate, non-Islamist Muslims have long tried to explain the inherent incompatibility of Islamism with a Western society that extols pluralism and equality. Islamists seek the total imposition of Islamic law upon society at large. To the Brotherhood and groups like it, the Koran and Islam are not *a* source of law but *the only* source of law. As the Muslim Brotherhood declares in its motto, "Allah is our objective, the Prophet is our leader, the Koran is our law, jihad is our way, dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope."

Moreover, engaging with Islamist organizations such as the Brotherhood lends legitimacy to an ideology that does not, in fact, represent the views of the majority of Muslims. Thus, American policymakers who advocate pursuing such a strategy are actually facilitating Islamism by endorsing it as a mainstream ideology. Some have

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already endorsed organizations that were founded by Brotherhood members and maintain a close ideological affiliation with the group, such as the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). Whether at home or abroad, such a policy is leading to disaster, as liberal, non-Islamist Muslims—having already been denounced by Islamists as apostates—are now being told by Western governments that they do not represent "real" Islam.

Empowering Islamists at the expense of non-Islamists hardly seems a wise strategy for the United States to pursue if it wants to win the war of ideas. After all, non-Islamists are already tremendously disadvantaged in terms of organization and funding. The Muslim Brotherhood has well-established networks of institutions, educational centers, and think tanks, as well as millions of dollars in donations from the Middle East. At the same time, many moderates are deterred from speaking out because of the ire doing so would provoke from Islamist groups. In the West, not only do critics have to worry about a *fatwa* calling for their death, but they are also faced with the prospect of getting sued for millions of dollars.

Indeed, Islamist organizations have flourished in the tolerant environment of the West, taking advantage of the freedom of speech to spread their hate-filled, anti-Semitic ideas without fear of reprisal. In the process, they actively and openly create a fifth column of activists who work to undermine the very systems under which Western societies operate. They are creating self-segregated societies in a process that has been called "voluntary apartheid." This tactic has been enthusiastically supported by the Muslim Brotherhood, whose unofficial spiritual leader Yusuf al-Qaradawi has repeatedly advised European Muslims to create their own "Muslim ghettos" to avoid cultural assimilation.

Islamist groups are engaged in a long-term social engineering project, by which they hope to lead Muslims to reject Western norms of pluralism, individual rights, and the rule of law. At the core of Islamist terrorism is the ideological machinery that works to promote sedition and hatred. That the tactics of the Muslim Brotherhood are nonviolent (or at least *less* violent) does not make the ideology behind those tactics any less antagonistic to the United States.

It may be that, when compared with al Qaeda or Hezbollah, the Muslim Brotherhood is the lesser evil. Yet engagement is worse than no engagement if it legitimizes Islamist ideology and alienates non-Islamists. Recognizing and responding to the threat posed by the Islamist ideology is an important part of the war on terror. Any American or Western engagement with Islamists should be critical in nature. Under no circumstances should we do them the favor of extolling Islamist ideologues as "moderates." ♦

Michael Ramirez

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From the Courthouse to the White House?

Fred Thompson auditions for the leading role

By Stephen F. Hayes

A strange thing happened a few weeks back when I went to the Café Promenade at the Mayflower Hotel for an off-the-record interview with an unpaid adviser to the non-campaign of unannounced presidential candidate Fred Thompson.

Fred Thompson showed up.

Thompson was there to have lunch with Ed Gillespie, former chairman of the Republican National Committee and a powerhouse consultant with ties to the White House. The two men worked together in the fall of 2005 on the confirmation of Supreme Court nominee John Roberts. Thompson had invited Gillespie to lunch to discuss a potential presidential bid.

On March 11, just a week before, Thompson had appeared on *Fox News Sunday* and told Chris Wallace that he was giving "serious consideration" to running for the 2008 Republican presidential nomination. Ever since, advisers on other campaigns have tried to figure out how he'll affect the race if he runs.

Several patrons in the restaurant recognized Thompson. One well-dressed man with thick white hair approached him for an autograph. It's possible that this man wanted the autograph because Thompson served for eight years as a senator from Tennessee. But it's more likely that he wanted a memento of the day he ate at the same restaurant as Arthur Branch, the sagacious district attorney on *Law & Order*; *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*; *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*; *Law & Order: Trial by Jury*; and *Conviction*, a spin-off of, well, you can probably guess. The same man returned to the table twice more. Each time Thompson put his conversation on hold and graciously tolerated the interruption.

After an hour, Thompson and Gillespie—currently chairman of the Republican party of Virginia—rose and left the restaurant. Ten minutes later, Thompson walked back in with former senator Bill Frist. They were led to a different table, but Thompson's waitress was the same. She laughed as she took his new order. Thompson says this second lunch was unplanned. Although he and Frist talk daily, the two Tennesseans met this time by chance. Finding they both had gaps in their schedules, they spent the next two hours at Café Promenade talking about a Fred Thompson for President campaign.

There is some discontent among Republicans with the current choices for the party's nominee in 2008. The complaints are well known: Senator John McCain, the maverick Republican, is too much maverick and not enough Republican. Former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani is thought to be too willful and too liberal: He recently suggested he would allow his new wife to attend cabinet meetings and reaffirmed his support for federal funding of abortion. Mitt Romney seems pleasant and competent, but pleasant and competent doesn't beat Hillary Clinton. Senator Sam Brownback is unknown and uncharismatic. And former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee is from Arkansas.

According to an adviser to one of the leading candidates, the rationale for a Thompson run is best illustrated—as so many things are—by *The Simpsons*. In one episode, Homer Simpson's civic-minded neighbor Ned Flanders tells a large crowd of fellow Springfield citizens that they must choose someone to lead an anticrime campaign in the town.

"Who should lead the group?"

"You," shouts a man from the crowd. The entire mob begins to chant.

"Flanders! Flanders! Flanders!"

When Flanders humbly begins to explain that he doesn't have much experience in such matters, Moe the Bartender cuts him off.

"Someone else!"

The crowd joins in.

"Someone else! Someone else! Someone else!"

One obvious advantage Fred Thompson has is that he's someone else.

In recent Republican presidential preference polls, Thompson tends to run third, behind Giuliani and McCain but ahead of Romney and the rest of the field. In a Bloom-

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berg/*Los Angeles Times* poll released last week, Thompson came in second, just ahead of McCain, with support from 15 percent of those surveyed. In late March, Thompson won a straw poll of Republicans in conservative Gwinnett County, Georgia, earning more votes than all of the other candidates combined. And Iowa Republican party executive director Chuck Laudner told the *Washington Times*, "He's the biggest buzz in the state."

Representative Zach Wamp, a fellow Tennesseean who is running an effort to "Draft Fred," tells me he expects 60 congressional Republicans to show up early next week at a meet-and-greet with Thompson. Mark Corallo, who has volunteered to answer press inquiries for Thompson, has been getting dozens of calls each day—not only from reporters, but from Republicans around the country who have seen his name in the newspaper and tracked him down at his private consulting firm to sign up for a Thompson campaign. Politicians are reaching out to Bill Frist to offer their support. Says Frist: "I have governors who have called me, fundraisers I've known from my days as majority leader who are ready to go."

All of this, for a candidate who has not yet announced for anything.

Last week, I went to Thompson's home in the verdant Washington suburb of McLean, Virginia, to talk to him about his prospective presidential run. We spoke for more than four hours about his life in Tennessee, his family, his acting career, his foray into politics, and his future.

I was 30 minutes late. Thompson, who was on the phone with Howard Baker, his political mentor, didn't seem to care. He hung up, extended his large hand, offered a friendly greeting, and led me to his office. We were alone. Thompson's work space looks just like what the home office of a successful politician or CEO should look like—though a little messier: a large desk, dark wood, leather furniture, lots of books and magazines and newspapers, a flat-screen TV, and box upon box of cigars—Montecristos from Havana.

The presence of the cigars and the absence of a press chaperone were clues that Thompson is taking a different approach to his potential candidacy. A campaign flack would have insisted on hiding the cigars—*Senator, how did you get those Cuban cigars? Isn't there a trade embargo?*—and might have dampened Thompson's natural candor. On subjects ranging from Social Security to abortion, the CIA and to Iran, there would be lots of candor over the next several hours.

And by the end of the conversation, two unexpected realities had emerged. If he joins the race for the Republican nomination, and if he campaigns the same way he spoke to me last week, Fred Thompson, a mild-mannered, slow-talking southern gentleman, will run as the politically aggressive conservative that George W. Bush hasn't been for four years. And the actor in the race could well be the most authentic personality in the field.

Thompson seems to recognize that he wins the guy-I'd-want-to-get-a-beer-with primary the moment he announces. He comes across as a regular guy—"folksy" will be the political cliché that attaches to his candidacy—and punctuates explanations of his positions with the kind of off-the-cuff homespun witticisms that Dan Rather spent a career trying to come up with.

We sat facing each other in leather armchairs, and after some small talk I asked him what life was like growing up in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. He began talking, and about 30 minutes later it was already 1994 and he was about to be elected to the U.S. Senate. I'd tried to interrupt with questions here and there, but he had a story he was determined to tell.

It's a good story. Thompson was born in Alabama and lived for most of his young life in Middle Tennessee. His father sold used cars and his mother took care of the house. Neither one graduated from high school, although Thompson's father earned his high school equivalency certificate later in life. His family ate dinner every night at 6:00 P.M. "It was like clockwork," he says. Thompson was not a great student in high school. At one point, he says, several of his teachers worked together to strip him of the title given to him by a vote of his peers—Most Athletic—because his grades were substandard. His father was something of a jokester, but also when necessary a disciplinarian.

"I grew up not having anything to live up to from an economic or professional standpoint, but having a lot to live up to from a growing-up and becoming-a-man standpoint," says Thompson.

That example would be important at a young age. Thompson married his high school sweetheart at 17, and together they enrolled at Memphis State University, where he studied philosophy and political science. Thompson worked several jobs to put himself through college and support a growing family.

"I sold clothing," he says. "I sold shoes. I sold baby shoes. I sold ladies shoes. I worked in a factory."

His wife's uncle and grandfather were both lawyers, and Thompson says he wanted to live up to the professional standards of her family. The law school at Vanderbilt University had seemed an unattainable goal for an underachieving high school student from a family without means. But it was a goal nonetheless. Thompson got serious academically as an undergraduate, and won admission.

Once a lawyer, he had a brief stint with the U.S. attorney's office, then went into private practice—"hung out my shingle," he says—and volunteered to work for Howard Baker's reelection campaign for Senate in 1972. Shortly after Baker

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returned to Washington he asked Thompson to join him for what he thought would be a short-term project. A special committee had been established to look into the Committee to Reelect President Richard M. Nixon, and Baker, the panel's top Republican, asked Thompson to serve as minority counsel. Thompson could often be seen at Baker's side as the investigation grew from a routine oversight hearing into the proceedings that would cause a president to resign. Thompson, who wrote a book about his experiences called *At That Point in Time: The Inside Story of the Senate Watergate Committee*, asked the question that led to the revelation of the White House taping systems. "Mr. Butterfield, are you aware of the installation of any listening devices in the Oval Office of the President?" And Thompson is often credited with feeding Baker the line that would become one of the most famous of an era: "What did the president know and when did he know it?"

Thompson says he passed up several offers with big Washington law firms to return to Nashville, where he entered a private practice with two law school classmates. He took the case of Marie Ragghianti, the head of Tennessee's Parole and Pardons Board. Ragghianti had grown concerned about what she saw as a pattern of suspicious pardons ordered from the office of Governor Ray Blanton. Her suspicions were later confirmed and Blanton was forced from office in a cash-for-clemency scandal that continued until his last day.

Peter Maas, author of *Serpico*, turned Marie Ragghianti's story into a book creatively titled *Marie* and published in 1983. Director Roger Donaldson bought the movie rights and came to Nashville to interview the major players. After meeting Thompson, Donaldson asked him if he'd like to play himself in the movie. Thompson agreed.

Over the next two decades, Thompson would appear in dozens of films and television shows as a character actor, often one who personifies government strength. It is a role that seems to fit. "Literally, I don't think Fred ever acts," says Tom Ingram, a longtime friend from Tennessee who now serves as chief of staff to Senator Lamar Alexander. "He played himself in *Marie*, and he's been playing himself ever since."

When Donaldson needed someone to play the role of CIA director in his next film, *No Way Out*, he turned to Thompson. A string of movies followed: *The Hunt for Red October*, *Days of Thunder*, *Die Hard 2*, *Curly Sue*, *Cape Fear*, *In the Line of Fire*. And there were cameo appearances on TV's *Matlock* and later *Sex and the City*.

Thompson never moved to Hollywood, choosing to stay in Tennessee, where he continued to practice law and remained involved in Republican politics. When Al Gore was elected vice president, Tennessee's Democratic governor, Ned McWherter, appointed one of his top advisers to serve until the 1994 elections, when a replacement would be elected to fill the final two years of Gore's term. Thompson's name came up early, and eventually, in July 1993, he filed papers for an exploratory committee.

Thompson knew from the beginning that it would be a difficult race. His opponent was Jim Cooper, a popular conservative Democrat who had developed a national reputation as a legislative expert on health care, widely considered one of the country's most important issues. Thompson started the race well behind Cooper. He told the *Memphis Commercial-Appeal* that he was a moderate Republican. The reporter who interviewed Thompson described him as "pro-choice," but noted that he supported restrictions on abortion at the state level and opposed federal funding. (A 1994 story in *National Review* also described Thompson as pro-choice.)

Thompson married his high school sweetheart at 17, and they enrolled at Memphis State University. He worked several jobs. "I sold clothing," he says. "I sold shoes. I sold baby shoes. I sold ladies shoes. I worked in a factory."

In a poll taken in February 1994, 36 percent of those surveyed said they would vote for Cooper, while just 17 percent supported Thompson. The *Hotline*, a Washington-based digest on campaigns and elections, reported the poll results under the headline: "They Know Thompson's Face, But Not His Name." It would prove to be an accurate diagnosis of Thompson's difficulties.

"For a year, I didn't scratch," Thompson says, looking back.

At the low point, Thompson met at a Cracker Barrel with Ingram. Thompson told his friend that he wasn't having any fun campaigning and was pessimistic about his chances to win. He was considering dropping out. Thompson had had it with the rubber-chicken Republican dinners and the rigors of campaigning across the state. "Fred was beleaguered by the traditional way of running for office," Ingram remembers. "He was expressing his misery over things."

Ingram had a question for Thompson: What would

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you do if you ran the way you wanted to run? Thompson thought for a minute, then said he'd shed as much of the campaign apparatus as possible and drive around the state in a pick-up truck. Ingram suggested he do just that, and Thompson thought it a good recommendation. Thompson would soon be known for his red pick-up truck. Cooper's campaign complained that it was a Hollywood-style gimmick designed to make Thompson look down to earth, and it surely was that. "But it was more than a device," Ingram insists. "It made Fred comfortable as a candidate. He felt liberated to just be himself."

Thompson ran on a strong small-government—even antigovernment—message. "America's government is bringing America down, and the only thing that can change that is a return to the basics," he said. "We will get back to basics and make the sacrifices and once again amaze the world at how, in America, ordinary people can do very extraordinary things." Thompson emphasized issues that would appeal to disaffected voters—making laws apply to the members of Congress who pass them; congressional pay raises; entitlement reform.

It was a message that began to resonate. Two months before the election, a poll by national Republicans put the race dead even. And as Thompson increased his advertising—allowing voters to put his famous face together with his name—he took the lead, and it grew. "Some people knew me and knew my face, but I started out 20 points behind" he says. "I just had to work at it until I raised enough money to go on television and then I went up pretty fast." Cooper asked for and was given free air-time for his ads after stations played movies starring Thompson. But it was too late.

Thompson won 61 percent of the vote, Cooper just 39 percent. Part of the explanation was that Thompson was swept along in the historic Republican tide of 1994. But Cooper would later say that he'd underestimated the political importance of Thompson's film career. "He was in so many movies," Cooper told the Nashville *Tennesseean* in 2002. "I should have been more worried than I was because that is a powerful way to present yourself to the public."

Thompson's new colleagues in Washington immediately tried to capitalize on his ability to communicate. Bob Dole, recently elevated to Senate majority leader, picked Thompson to present the televised Republican response to a national address by President Bill Clinton.

On Christmas Day, 1994, Thompson was a guest on ABC's *This Week*. Sam Donaldson opened the interview by telling viewers that while they might not know the name Fred Thompson, they might recognize his face. "I want to just show people how accomplished you are, because if they have been sitting at home saying, 'You know, I know this guy, I know this guy,' there's a reason," he said, before playing clips of the actor.

Thompson was at his most self-deprecating. "When they needed some middle-aged guy who'd work cheap, they'd call me for a little part and I'd go out there two or three weeks and knock one out," he explained to Donaldson.

Donaldson asked Thompson why he was chosen to give the GOP response to Clinton. "I want to keep boring in on this question of—perhaps you were chosen because the Republican leaders said, 'Fred Thompson is not just another pretty face.' I mean, Fred Thompson—"

"That's for sure."

Then Donaldson asked Thompson about presidential politics. "Who are the Republicans going to put up to run for the presidency in two years?"

"I think that it's going to be wide open," Thompson replied. "I think that there's at least a half a dozen people out there. There might be someone that hasn't been mentioned."

"Let me give you a name," Donaldson pressed. "Let me give you a name: Fred Thompson. Senator Fred Thompson."

Thompson found the suggestion amusing. "There's one thing, I think, for certain that I've observed around here over the period of time that I've been here, and watching all this for years, and that is when people come to town, somewhere along the line, if they do anything at all, if they're shown to be able to put one foot in front of the other, they're mentioned for the national ticket. So now you've mentioned me, and I appreciate it, so we can move on to more serious topics."

Thompson had not yet been sworn in.

In eight years in the Senate, Thompson developed a reputation for an independent streak, yet he compiled a voting record more conservative than one might expect of one who had described himself as a moderate in his first campaign. Over the course of his time in Congress he earned a lifetime rating by the American Conservative Union of 86 percent. He was not quite as conservative (using 2002 numbers) as Rick Santorum (87), Strom Thurmond (91), Trent Lott (93), or Jesse Helms (99), but more conservative than Arlen Specter (42), Olympia Snowe (52), John Warner (82), and John McCain (84).

His voting record suggests a strong belief in federalism. Thompson was frequently a lonely voice opposing the federalization of what in his view were state issues. His unwillingness to compromise on that principle even put him on the losing end of a 99-to-1 vote on the so-called Good Samaritan law, legislation that protected individuals from being sued if their good faith efforts to help someone in distress were unsuccessful. He thought it should have been left to the states.

Thompson also served as chairman of the Senate Government Relations Committee, which he used to investi-

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gate fundraising irregularities in the 1996 presidential election cycle. Republicans had high hopes that Thompson's inquiry would add to the political difficulties of the Clinton White House stemming from its malfeasance on campaign financing.

After the hearings ended, Fox News Channel's Brit Hume described Thompson as "flying high before his hearings . . . and shot down once they started and all the way through them."

Thompson says "the congressional investigative function is not a prosecutorial function" and acknowledges that the hearings produced "mixed result in many respects." He believes the criticism stems from the fact that "few people went to jail."

As Thompson considered his future, he began telling friends that he was not certain he wanted to seek reelection in 2002. He changed his mind after the attacks of September 11. Thompson, who served at the time on the Senate Intelligence Committee, announced in late September that he would run again. "Now is not the time for me to leave," he said. "This is the way now, it's perfectly clear, for me to contribute the most." He spent the next several weeks traveling to churches throughout Tennessee talking about the attacks and the coming U.S. response to them.

At a hearing of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee on October 4, 2001, Thompson sounded a skeptical note about the prospect of reorganizing the federal homeland security bureaucracy. "The government, basically, cannot manage large projects very well," he said. "Maybe we can learn from our past experience with other government agencies and other crises and things of that nature and not make the same mistakes as we go about trying to rearrange these boxes and decide who reports to who and who has what authority. And maybe we'll take the lessons that we've learned from our other management problems in particular."

Then in late January 2002, his daughter Elizabeth Panici died suddenly following a heart attack. She was only 38. Thompson's friends say he was devastated. A month later he announced that he had changed his mind—he would not seek reelection. "I simply do not have the heart for another six-year term."

At a press conference after his announcement, he lashed out at the media for their intrusive coverage of his private life. "Every public official has to understand that he or she is a public official and that's the price you pay. For the most part, that's appropriate," he said. "That's the price your whole family pays. There are lines to be drawn. I think it's extremely unfortunate and uncalled for for the local newspaper to discuss the details of this. Her death obviously played in my decision, but the details of all of that, what news value does that have? Why did she have to pay that price? Why does her little five-year-old boy have to pay that price because her daddy chose to try to serve his state and his country? It's over the line and more like the *National Enquirer*-type stuff than anything else."

In his final months in the Senate, Thompson concentrated his efforts on legislation that would create the Department of Homeland Security. He fought efforts by Democrats to subject the new workforce to union and collective bargaining rules that apply to federal employees more broadly. The bill passed two weeks after the 2002 midterm elections, on a vote of 90-9.

In eight years in the Senate, Thompson developed a reputation for an independent streak, yet he compiled a voting record more conservative than one might expect of one who had described himself as a moderate.

"This is the most significant thing I've been involved in and certainly the most significant thing I've had my name on because it involves the main function of government, and that is protecting its citizens."

More than four years later, munching on a turkey sandwich and sour cream and onion potato chips at his dining room table, he displays an unusual willingness to second-guess his own decision. After Thompson criticized the growth of bureaucracy under the new director of national intelligence, I asked him why the new bureaucracy under Department of Homeland Security is any different.

"Well, to tell you the truth, in retrospect, we may conclude that it wasn't any different. But it got to the point where almost anything would have been an improvement," he says. "A lot of those agencies were in and of themselves dysfunctional, so bringing them together was not going to make everybody greater. . . . But you've got to start somewhere and you can't wait until everything is just right until you start coordinating. So we were kind of jumping aboard a moving train."

It was an admirably honest appraisal of what he once pointed to as the crowning achievement of his career in Con-

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gress. As we spoke, I was struck by the fact that Thompson didn't seem to be calibrating his answers for a presidential run. On issue after contentious issue, I got the sense from both his manner and the answers he gave me that he was just speaking extemporaneously. Many of his answers would drive a poll-watching political consultant nuts.

My suspicions were confirmed when Thompson asked at one point if he could have a transcript of our interview. "I found myself talking on some subjects that I haven't really thought that much about," he explained. "Oh, so this is what I think, huh?"

* Thompson says he came to respect George W. Bush during the 2000 campaign because of his plan to reform Social Security. Congressional Republicans considered the plan a political liability, and it went nowhere. Thompson says that although it was only tinkering on the margins of real reform, it was a good start. He won't share his own plan—"I'll roll that out at the appropriate time"—but the general principle he articulates sounds like a political risk.

"It's based upon the proposition that granddad and grandmom will be willing to sacrifice a little bit if they feel like it helps their grandkids avoid financial disaster, and that their sacrifice is not going to be wasted down some government rathole," he explains. "Under most plans, most good plans, you know current retirees probably would not be affected that much at all. . . . We've been operating under the assumption in this country that it's the third rail and that if you talk about it, those people who are most concerned about retirement programs will kill you. I don't think that's true."

* He believes that elements of the CIA were out to get Scooter Libby and his boss, Vice President Dick Cheney. Libby, though not the original leaker of the identity of CIA employee Valerie Plame, was convicted of lying and obstructing justice. "It makes me mad as the devil just to think about it," Thompson says. He had never met Libby when he volunteered to serve on the advisory board of the Scooter Libby Legal Defense Trust. Is Libby innocent? Thompson answers with one word. "Yes."

Do you think there will be negative political fallout from defending the convicted former chief of staff to an unpopular vice president?

"I have no idea. I have a hard time seeing it. If I'm wrong about the temperature of the American people on this, then I'm wrong about a lot of things about the American people. And we might as well find out."

* I asked him about his vote for the Iraq war and the Bush administration's failure to explain to the American public the real story of the prewar intelligence on Iraq. I ask Thompson how it is possible that a majority of the country believes the Bush administration lied about Iraqi WMD, when the U.S. intelligence community and the world consensus was that Saddam Hussein had these weapons.

"Part of it had to do with what has become almost a knee-jerk suspicion on the part of a lot of people with regards to anybody in authority," he says. And then he directly faults the Bush administration. "A part of it has been the administration's inability to sufficiently communicate the reality of the situation. It's not just the president. . . . You have to have an organized, pervasive ability to get your message across and rebut erroneous misstatements of the history. It is amazing to me how something like this could be perceived so erroneously by so many people. Because we all know what the facts are. We've all seen the statements and the comments of Hillary Clinton and Bill Clinton, and the ranking Democrat on the intelligence committee, and the list goes on and on and on."

Thompson slips into sarcasm. "It is amazing to me how a man that they say is so dumb fooled so many real smart people. But that's what they're saying about Bush. Bush canoodled the entire Democratic establishment. Absurd on its face, and yet some people want to believe that sort of thing."

Then he goes on to give a better defense of the White House than anything that has come out of the White House communications shop in four years.

> The irony here is that intelligence services had consistently over the years understated the capabilities of enemies and potential enemies. Now, here there was unanimity among the intelligence services, some of whom are supposed to be better than ours. . . . People don't understand intelligence. They don't understand. It's seldom clear. It's often caveated. It's sometimes flat-out wrong. Different people often have different ideas. That's what a president is faced with. And some today would say that politically a president has got to have unanimity before he can make a choice. And then they say that if he has that unanimity, the president has to make that choice—at the same time talking about how deficient our capabilities are. But if those deficient capabilities produced a recommendation, the president of the United States and leader of the free world has to take that recommendation. That has been so faulty in the past. It's absurd. Presidents in the future, as always, have to make a determination based on a lot of things, and intelligence is one of them. And the president not only has the right to evaluate the intelligence that he's receiving, he has a duty to do that. He listens to the British. I mean, if history was any judge, I don't know about now, but if the Brits tell me that there's an [Iraqi] deal with Niger and our guys don't know whether there was or not, I tend to rely on the Brits. I mean, those are the calls the president's got to make, and the question is really: Which way do you want the president to lean? Caution—that it's probably not so? When bad news is delivered, he gets mixed messages, he gets various intelligence reports of various kinds. Did you want him all balled up in all of that, you know, trying to apply some kind of a scientific equation to it for fear that somebody in an intelligence committee is going to wave it around at a hearing later on or something like that? Is that what it's come to? If so, the world is going to be a lot more dangerous than it otherwise already is. You've got to exercise the authority and the responsibilities that you've been given. I mean, in this debate over intelligence and what it is and what it ought to be and how it's used and all of that, you know,

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> [it] needs to be dealt with and laid out in a way that people can understand it. . . . The next report says somebody's got weapons of mass destruction, you know what're we going to do with that? You know, just because history—a cat won't sit on a hot stove twice, but he won't sit on a cold stove either.

⋆ He is equally blunt about Iran. Thompson says that the actions of the Iranian regime—harboring senior al Qaeda leaders, funding and training Iraqi insurgents, supplying terrorists in Iraq with devices that are killing American soldiers—are acts of war. He stops short of calling for a military response, but seems to suggest that he would be saying something different if circumstances were different.

"Unfortunately, today it can't be considered in isolation, so you have to take into consideration our capabilities and our priorities worldwide right now. And unfortunately we're stretched too thin." Nonetheless, he says, the long-term objective in Iran is the same one that led to the Iraq war. "I think the bottom line with Iran is that nothing is going to change unless there is a regime change."

⋆ In the days since Thompson allowed that he was thinking about running for president, his views on abortion have come under scrutiny. Thompson finds the news reports from his first run for Senate perplexing.

"I have read these accounts and tried to think back 13 years ago as to what may have given rise to them. Although I don't remember it, I must have said something to someone as I was getting my campaign started that led to a story. Apparently, another story was based upon that story, and then another was based upon *that*, concluding I was pro-choice."

But, he adds: "I was interviewed and rated pro-life by the National Right to Life folks in 1994, and I had a 100 percent voting record on abortion issues while in the Senate."

Darla St. Martin, associate executive director of National Right to Life, supports Thompson on those claims. She traveled to Tennessee in 1994 to meet with him. "I interviewed him and on all of the questions I asked him, he opposed abortion," she told the *American Spectator*'s Philip Klein.

Thompson says he thinks *Roe* v. *Wade* is bad law and should be overturned, but he says he does not support a Human Life Amendment.

One of the few times Thompson was unwilling to share his thoughts came when I asked him if he thought Rudy Giuliani was too liberal to win the Republican nomination and if Hillary Clinton could make a good president. The only question he would answer about his potential rivals concerned John McCain.

Thompson was one of four senators to support McCain in 2000 and served as the national co-chairman of his campaign. So I asked him why he's not supporting McCain again.

"You know the old joke about—what about me? As self-centered as that sounds, and it is, that ought to be the way it is." He adds: "Besides, you can't predict what's going to happen anyway, with any of them. Anybody could implode. Anybody could take off."

Before his appearance on *Fox News Sunday*, Thompson called McCain to let him know that he would announce that he was seriously considering a presidential bid. The conversation was friendly. "If we do this," he says, "we'll remain friends and we'll be friends after this."

There is considerable talk among the other Republican campaigns that the Thompson boomlet is driven by little more than celebrity. Maybe. But history suggests that Thompson may actually be underpolling right now. As was the case when he ran for office in Tennessee, he has a very recognizable face but his national name identity is actually quite low.

Gallup conducted a survey in late March asking respondents an open-ended question: "What comes to your mind when you think about former Tennessee senator Fred Thompson?" Sixty-seven percent of Republicans responded that they had no opinion of Thompson or were not familiar with him. And yet he shows up in the top three choices of potential Republican nominees in most of the polling that includes his name. As voters come to associate that name with a familiar and well-liked face, and if they get to see the personable Thompson on TV, Thompson strategists assume those polling numbers can only go up.

When Thompson met with Bill Frist at the Mayflower Hotel, they had important business to discuss. More than two years ago, Thompson had been diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. It is "indolent" lymphoma, a slow-growing form of the disease that is not usually symptomatic. If you're going to have one of the 33 varieties of lymphoma, Thompson says, this is the one you want. "It's easy to diagnose, easy to treat and easy to live with," Frist, a physician, confirms. But it sounds scary, the kind of thing that might spook potential primary voters if it were disclosed by an announced candidate.

"We thought we had to get it out early," says Frist, "in the sense that he's going to be announcing."

If Frist's acknowledgment that Thompson was going to run may have been a slip, Thompson's own words also suggest he's running. He says he understands "how hard it is, how difficult it is, how embarrassing it is, how intrusive it is." And he knows that as a candidate he could be subject to harsh attacks.

"That's the least of it anymore," he says. "It's not pleasant, but it's not that important anymore because you're straight with your family, you have a level of understanding and knowledge about your family, and they with you, and with the man upstairs, and that's that. You know, ain't really much past that. And it kind of frees you up in a way."

Yes, it does. ♦

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The Nonprofit Industrial Complex

Is there such a thing as too much civil society?

By Gerard Alexander

As if the United States doesn't stand out enough these days, yet another trend is making us more and more distinct in the world: the massive growth of our nonprofit sector. Some people hope, and others fear, that this might change the very nature of American society. Western countries have already been transformed by industrialization, the rise of the service sector, and the growth of big government. The result has been wealthy economies, middle-class societies, and vast bureaucracies. Our country might now be transformed again by the spread of what Richard Cornuelle dubbed the "independent sector." The growth of nonprofits—from the Getty Museum to Seattle's Children's Hospital, Emory University, and your aunt's country club—has created the world's largest sector that is neither business fish nor government fowl. It has the private sector's diversity and independence but the government's lack of a profit motive. It is a different way of doing business. It may be a different way of making a country. But is it a wholesome one?

The sheer scale and rapid growth of America's nonprofit sector make it difficult to ignore. In most of history, private not-for-profit organizations weren't a topic of much attention because they weren't especially important compared with the markets from which people drew their sustenance and the governments that often extracted whatever they could from them. But with the growth of our national wealth, nonprofits have been expanding relentlessly. The Independent Sector, which is basically the industry group for nonprofits, reports that the combined annual expenditures of all the not-for-profit organizations required to file Form 990 with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service had grown to nearly $1 *trillion* in 2004. (That's about half what the federal government spends each year, not counting defense.) In 1977, nonprofits employed around 6 million Americans; by 2001, that was up to 12 million. Roughly 85 percent of this work is in health care (primarily hospitals and nursing homes), social services like child care and job training, and education. If volunteer time is counted, nonprofits represent over 10 percent of all U.S. employment.

If anything, statistics like these underreport the size of America's nonprofit sector, because they often don't include large religious organizations, which have a distinct tax status. And they generally don't include state universities and colleges, which are technically government entities but now often register as nonprofits, frequently get only a minority of their funding from government, and function as nonprofits in almost every meaningful sense. Colleges add real heft to the numbers. In 1940, there were only 147,000 faculty members nationwide. By 1970, there were 474,000, and by 2003, almost 1.2 million, 54 percent of them full-time and most of them at state schools. And this doesn't include hundreds of thousands of college administrators.

All these nonprofits get the bulk of their money either through donations, from government subsidies, or by charging fees like tuition, hospital bills, and AAA memberships. They also get a healthy slice of their revenue from tens of thousands of foundations that are the financial heavyweights of America's nonprofit world. The Foundation Center estimates that the combined assets of these grantmaking bodies (in current dollars) grew from $30 billion in 1975 to $227 billion in 1995 and about $525 billion in 2005. The Gates Foundation is the largest, with about $29 billion even before Warren Buffett's $30 billion, multiyear pledge. The Ford Foundation is in second place with around $12 billion. All U.S. foundations (including corporate foundations) gave away $33.6 billion in 2005, more than double in real terms what they gave only a decade earlier.

And they aren't the only nonprofits with bulging portfolios. The top 765 U.S. universities and colleges (including state schools) tracked by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*

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jointly held $340 billion in their endowments as of mid-2006. At least 62 of them have endowments of $1 billion or more, with Harvard at $29 billion, Yale at $18 billion, and Stanford at $14 billion. Northwestern, Emory, and Washington University in St. Louis each have around $5 billion. Here, too, growth has been accelerating. In 1981, Harvard was the only single-campus school to have more than $1 billion in the bank. But in the 1980s, schools started aggressively fundraising, and in the 1990s, many schools doubled or even (like Yale and MIT) tripled their endowments. By 2002, Harvard alone had amassed more than the combined endowments of all 192 colleges that had been tracked in 1981. With massive ongoing fundraising campaigns, university endowments could easily surpass traditional foundations as the largest nonprofit asset-holders, each one with a single designated recipient. Harvard may already have more money than the Gates Foundation, and four other schools have surpassed the Ford Foundation.

America is such a rich and charitable country that the list doesn't stop there. Their annual reports show that the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, in Chevy Chase, Md., has a $16.3 billion endowment; New York City's Metropolitan Museum has amassed $2.2 billion; the Wildlife Conservation Society, which funds New York City's zoos, has $463 million invested; and the Metropolitan Opera has $300 million in the bank. These institutions have hundreds of more modestly endowed counterparts in hospitals, zoos, and arts institutions across the country. Ten leading U.S. think tanks have just under $1.4 billion in combined endowments.

Even secondary schools are in the game. The titan is the ethnic-favoring Kamehameha School group in Hawaii, which has over $7.6 billion to its name, deriving from an original property bequest. Of the better-known boarding schools, the leading dozen (such as Andover, Deerfield, and Choate) have more laboriously amassed endowments that approach a whopping $4 billion combined. The next dozen have hundreds of millions more. And none of this includes the assets held more opaquely by institutions like the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, whose assets were estimated a full decade ago at $25-30 billion.

All U.S. nonprofit endowments combined probably exceed $1 trillion, sloshing around America's stock, bond, and real estate markets. And observers see more coming, if high-asset baby boomers, as expected, pour tens of billions more into personalized foundations designed to cure specific ills at home and abroad.

America's nonprofit sector is now so large, and hosts so many well-feathered nests, that academic programs are being built around the subject. A slew of university centers are devoted to the study of nonprofits and philanthropy, scores of graduate schools, including leading business schools, now offer concentrations in nonprofit management, and in 2004 Indiana University launched a Ph.D. program in philanthropic studies.

And the United States is leading the way. Only a few small countries have a greater share of their workforces in paid employment at nonprofits. And none matches this country in terms of assets. This is partly because "European countries do not offer comparable tax benefits" for charitable donations, points out Tyler Cowen, an economist at George Mason University. Compared with charity-favoring U.S. laws, European rules often offer donors complicated, few, or even no tax deductions, and make foundations very labor-intensive to create and then difficult to run under state supervision. Higher tax-takes may also mean that Europeans amass less of the private wealth that is the basis of most philanthropy.

Whatever the reason, Europeans make donations, for example, to their alma maters at what Americans would consider very low rates. So it's not surprising that most European universities have few assets. Cambridge and Oxford are standouts for their American-style endowments of around £4 billion each. But the U.K.'s other universities lag far behind, with only a handful having as much as $150 million in recent years. That means that Phillips Exeter boarding school has a larger endowment than more than half a dozen leading British universities combined. And many continental universities don't have endowments to speak of at all. It's no coincidence that some European nonprofits like British universities and museums come to the United States in search of donors.

We can tell a similar story about foundations. Europe has a number of sizable foundations, especially in Germany, where the 15 largest private (often corporate) foundations have combined assets of about $23 billion—about the size of two Ford Foundations—in addition to religious charities. But foundations are anemic in rich countries like France and Italy. Throughout Europe, it is government that funds the vast bulk of education, health care, research, and culture. For that matter, Japan has the world's second-largest economy, with about 37 percent of America's gross domestic product. But at the start of this decade, the 20 largest Japanese foundations had only around 3 percent of the assets of the 20 largest American ones.

You might expect Americans to cheer the growth of their nonprofits, since they reflect American generosity and may transform society in do-good directions. Yet the growth of nonprofits has caused extensive unease. Radicals on the left have long feared that foundations, for example, prop up capitalism by mitigating its worst effects. And even many conservatives, otherwise famous for championing voluntarism and the mediating institutions of civil

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society, are worried that the nonprofit sector may be turning out to be more vicious than virtuous. This concern is encapsulated in the law formulated by John O'Sullivan when he was editor of *National Review*: "All organizations that are not actually right-wing will over time become left-wing." In this view, nonprofits gravitate through the years to agendas not only that their original donors never intended but that are unrepresentative of American society. And then they are immune to reform.

Nowhere is this clearer than with foundations whose endowments let them operate in perpetuity. After the original donor departs the scene, foundations can be taken over by professional staffs who literally have a blank check with which to pursue their own agendas. These staffers don't have to answer to dues-payers or even donors, and they help select their boards of directors and then their own replacements. As scholar Kenneth Prewitt puts it, an endowed foundation is "perhaps unique in its distance from any accountability mechanism: no shareholders, no customers, no voters, no dues-paying members, no clients who can withhold contributions or support."

Conservatives' favorite example is the Ford Foundation, which came to pursue agendas that Henry Ford would have found repugnant and which several of his descendants criticized to no avail. The Manhattan Institute's Heather Mac Donald has chronicled how the Ford staff, priding themselves on subverting America's inadequacies, funded projects that urged "marginalized" Americans to seek solutions to their problems through government assistance and identity politics rather than through self-reliance and in their local communities. These efforts may well have encouraged new forms of economic, political, and cultural segregation that ultimately hurt those they were meant to help.

Agendas like these have placed Ford outside the mainstream, which is why it's so difficult to imagine a Ford Foundation president serving today at the highest reaches even of a Democratic administration, in the way that Ford's McGeorge Bundy or the Carnegie Corporation's John Gardner did in the 1960s. But there are no mechanisms to prevent senior staffers at foundations like Ford from using "their position at the intersection of the elite worlds of government, politics, academia and the press to remake America in their own progressive image," or at least to try to.

Much the same can be said about universities. Almost all faculties dramatically underrepresent conservative and especially social-conservative beliefs. The most obvious result is a liberal-leaning climate on the campuses that educate the next generation of America's professionals. Another result is that a solidly middle- and even upper-middle-class professoriate has become a notable donor base for progressive political causes. The Center for Responsive Politics reports that employees of universities and other educational institutions gave over $36 million to all presidential campaigns in 2004, almost 80 percent of it to Democrats. That year, Harvard and the University of California system were the top two institutions in terms of employee per capita contributions to John Kerry. Faculties serve as an institutional base for what passes as radicalism these days. Cranks on the right have to wait until they get home from work to chase Vincent Foster's real killers. But the Scholars for 9/11 Truth can make conspiracy-theorizing and activism part of their job descriptions.

As with foundations, the unrepresentativeness of campuses may be permanent, because tenured professors select their own replacements and universities rival foundations in their insulation from outside pressures. Not only do elite universities have large endowments, but they aren't even especially responsive to donors, because what college fundraisers do best is commodify nostalgia for what campus-life was like 40 years earlier, rather than "selling" their school's current practices. Given the size and complexity of modern universities, even careful donors would find it difficult to detect the Ward Churchills they've never heard of. The result is that universities end up using donated money for things that both earlier and many ongoing donors would be disgusted with.

Similar criticisms are directed at nonprofits that are ostensibly more susceptible to pressure. Many nonprofits are technically membership organizations, but their professional staffs are often as insulated from members' opinions as corporate CEOs are from average stockholders. And many social services nonprofits get most of their funding from government, which makes them even more prone to politicization. Instead of acting as a bulwark of civil society, these nonprofits often press for ever more government spending.

Of course, there are grounds for skepticism about the most outsized charges leveled against "nonprofits gone wild." After all, the multiculturalism, balkanizing ethnic and gender studies programs, and other developments often attributed to the long arm of the Ford Foundation are if anything even stronger in Europe, where such foundations are weak or absent. Moreover, there is every reason to assume that one of the main criticisms of governments—that a lack of incentives makes them inefficient and often ineffective—applies just as much to nonprofits.

Still, it is hard to deny that the New Left's long march through our national institutions landed it in firm control of the one sector that's exempt from the discipline of both the marketplace and the polling booth, and it is using this power to try to turn us into Sweden by stealth. And if anything, the situation stands to get worse. Remember those graduate school programs in philanthropic studies? It is universities, of all unbiased places, that are in charge of

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training the people who will staff the growing nonprofit sector down the road.

Concerns like these have inspired calls for political oversight of nonprofits. Some continue to come from the left. When Warren Buffett added his billions to the Gates Foundation, Elizabeth Boris of the Urban Institute wondered "whether or not the equivalent of $60 billion in assets invested in decision-making by three people is good for society. Any three people." Rick Cohen, then of the liberal National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, insisted that "when the money is in the Gates Foundation . . . it is money that we have entrusted that foundation to use in the public interest."

But the most intense skepticism toward America's emerging nonprofit industrial complex is coming from conservatives and libertarians, who normally champion civil society. Some are trying to use publicity to pressure for reform. Daniel Klein and other scholars have researched the partisan orientations of university professors and disseminated the predictable results. The American Enterprise Institute and the Federalist Society launched an "NGO Watch" website in response to the "fast and often unchecked growth" of the nonprofit sector. The Capital Research Center tracks and publicizes political bias in foundations and other nonprofits. Some have tried to organize donors and trustees to pressure universities into becoming more politically representative. The Robertson Foundation is even suing Princeton to retrieve millions of dollars from an endowment that they say is misused.

But perhaps inevitably, some are pressing for political intervention. David Horowitz aims to deliver more political balance through an "academic bill of rights," which he threatens to impose on state universities through the legislative process if necessary. Some have considered legally forcing all foundations to "sunset"—i.e., eventually give away all their assets—rather than exist in perpetuity, to avoid their eventual capture by unrepresentative professional staffers. Last June, Republican state representative Bill Huizenga cosponsored a bill in the Michigan state house that would oblige foundation boards to follow the intent of original donors. To be sure, Horowitz is targeting only public universities, since that's where legislatures have leverage. But these are all attempts to use political means to rein in highly unrepresentative but powerful nonprofits that seem beyond the reach of any other means of control.

Concerned conservatives could even decide that what some liberals think is good for the foundation goose might be good for the university gander. After all, Harvard's $29 billion endowment is in effect a massive foundation that is basically controlled by the self-selecting members of the not-at-all-transparent Harvard Corporation, whose names even most Harvard alums don't know and who are much less known to the public than Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett. (They are: professors Derek Bok, Patricia King, and Nannerl Keohane; businessmen James Houghton, James Rothenberg, and Robert Rubin; and the Urban Institute's own president, Robert Reischauer.) Maybe the political process should have a say in college endowments?

But calls for political intervention should sound serious alarms. The only sector we make fully accountable to the political process is government itself. It is the unique risks posed by government's coercive monopoly that justify subjecting it to the very costly and inefficient discipline of elected politicians and, behind them, a sovereign electorate "whose vocabulary is limited to two words, 'Yes' and 'No,'" as political scientist E.E. Schattschneider once put it.

By contrast, the for-profit economy is unthreatening even without political "accountability," because its power is diffused among scores of millions of people who are under the relentless pressure of mutual competition. Forced to attract their customers anew every week, quarter, or year, businesses have to be responsive and constantly innovate. This creates a climate of dynamism in which no one entity or agenda can gain a hegemonic position from which to threaten everyone else.

The same things—pluralism, competition, change, and dynamism—are what make political intervention unnecessary in America's nonprofit sector. New nonprofits arise, old ones disappear, and many that survive do so by adapting to changing circumstances, including to the changing tastes of a shifting cast of donors. And the nonprofit sector remains startlingly permeable and diverse. Numerous progressive institutions are accompanied by many centrist and conservative ones, both secular and religious. Not surprisingly, the most promising efforts aimed at making universities more politically balanced are emerging from elsewhere within the nonprofit sector.

But most of the change in the nonprofit sector comes from the waves of creative construction surging outward from America's dynamic economy. More than anything, this will keep shaking things up even for the nonprofits that seem the most insulated from change. For one thing, money made in the marketplace is constantly creating new nonprofits. The Foundation Center reports that of the foundations that either had assets of at least $1 million or gave away at least $100,000 in 2004, a fifth were launched in the 1980s and fully half created since 1990. This includes some behemoths. The Gates Foundation was created only in 2000, and its annual giving—even before Buffett's massive contribution—is already beginning to rival Sweden's annual foreign aid. Yet the United States "is such a charitable country that even with Buffett's billions, the Gates Foundation will still

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account for only 1 percent of American charitable giving," points out Adam Meyerson, president of the Philanthropy Roundtable. This leads Meyerson to venture the prediction that "20 years from now, Gates will not be America's largest foundation." The point is that not even the best-endowed foundations have guaranteed influence or status. We can't foresee the content of the coming American philanthropic wave, any more than we've been able to predict the direction of America's innovative economy.

Just as important, for-profit firms have discovered ways to do business in areas in which nonprofits once grew fat and lazy. Consider health care and education, traditionally the two largest sectors of nonprofit activity. Nonprofit hospitals decisively surpassed their for-profit competitors by the middle of the 20th century. But these nonprofits became increasingly dependent on private markets for capital, and a number converted to for-profit status in the 1980s and mid-1990s. For-profit hospitals have been gradually clawing their way back, initially at the expense of direct government provisioning. From 1975 to 2003, the for-profit sector has grown from 7.8 percent of beds in community hospitals to 14 percent, as the local, state, and especially federal government shares shrank and the nonprofit share merely held steady. Nonprofit hospitals are looking over their shoulders, and prosper only by reforming and innovating.

For-profit growth is even more dramatic in health insurance. In years past, mainline insurers like Blue Cross/Blue Shield and the early health maintenance organizations (HMOs) were nonprofits. But for-profits became powerful HMO players in the 1980s. And mutual and nonprofit insurers began a wave of conversions to for-profit status, despite frequently having to pay the price of placing sizable assets into "health legacy foundations." In 1994, Blue Cross/Blue Shield allowed for-profits to become member plans for the first time. By 2002, Blue plans had converted to for-profit status in over a dozen states, including California and New York, many of which then merged into WellPoint, Inc.

Trends in education are nearly as dramatic. Those of us who grew up with television ads for the New England Tractor Trailer Training School tend to think of for-profit education as a very modest affair. Not any more. Three-quarters of a million students and tens of thousands of full- and part-time faculty can now be found enrolled and employed in the (mostly U.S.-based) programs of America's seven largest for-profit higher education companies: ITT Educational Services, Laureate Education, Career Education, DeVry, Strayer, Corinthian Colleges, and the market-leading Apollo Group, which owns the University of Phoenix. These companies are directly competing with community colleges and now better schools by offering price-competitive degrees and aggressive job placement in business management, education, health care, technology, and human resources. The point is not that Strayer will soon go head to head with Princeton. It's that colleges being challenged by the for-profits can't afford to be complacent and are having to implement reforms that will likely ripple upward. The for-profits might even offer some political diversity to the education sector. The Center for Responsive Politics reports that while employees of many traditional universities regularly give 90-95 percent of their contributions to Democratic candidates, in the 2006 elections, the employees and corporate PACs of the Apollo Group gave a majority of their contributions to Republicans, while at Corinthian Colleges, the breakdown was only 60 percent to 40 percent in favor of Democrats.

Structural changes like these in health and education may help explain why nonprofit employment seems to be leveling off. At least as measured by jobs in membership associations and organizations, employment in nonprofits through the 1990s grew faster than job growth in either government or the for-profit sector. But it then plateaued and has grown more slowly, possibly substantially so, than total employment between 2003 and now.

America's economy is so dynamic that it can humble even huge endowments. In only a decade of public trading, the Apollo Group has achieved a market capitalization of $7.54 billion, more than a quarter the value of Harvard's endowment. The combined market capitalization of the seven for-profit higher-education companies listed earlier currently stands at $22 billion, more than Princeton and MIT's endowments put together. And this doesn't include billions more in value in a privately held firm like Education Management Corporation. In other words, America's most venerable nonprofits are being given a serious run for their endowment money by a for-profit sector that virtually no one saw coming just 15 years ago.

The combination of economic growth and proliferating new nonprofit groups means that the weight even of the very largest nonprofits is very limited and can easily decline over time. For example, the Ford Foundation's annual giving hasn't risen but instead *fallen* as a share of America's gross domestic product, to about one-third of what it was in 1960, and around two-fifths of what it was in 1968, when Ford was at the height of its supposed culture-subverting power.

Of course, the story is very different in developing countries. There, scores of politiczed nongovernmental organizations funded by Ford and other Western foundations can distort the local political, activist, and media scene in ways that weak local economies and civil societies cannot easily resist. But in America, the creativity and resilience of civil society in general and the profit-making economy in particular ensure that the nonprofit industrial complex adds to, and doesn't endanger, our national life. One more reason maintaining economic dynamism should be one of our highest priorities. ♦

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Tennessee Williams, Key West, 1957

The Tennessee Waltz

Dancing with genius and despair BY JOHN SIMON

The *Notebooks* of Tennessee Williams is really two books. On the verso pages we get Williams's text in rather fine print. On the facing recto pages, in minuscule print, are Margaret Bradham Thornton's annotations plus illustrations, and what annotations and illustrations they are! There are explications, quotations, cross references, biographical and historical notes (generous information about, say, George S. Kaufman and Ernest Dowson and the Spanish Civil War, which we may find supererogatory). There are long excerpts from letters by and to Williams, with sometimes only marginal bearing on him, and frequent passages from the plays, stories, poems, and his *Memoirs*.

There are useful corrections of his atrocious misspellings, even of the names of people with whom he was closely connected. And then the illustrations: Profuse reproductions of Williams's handwriting at all stages, typescripts without even handwritten corrections, the covers of the 30 notebooks wherein these journals were kept, and countless photographs of their pages.

Notebooks
by Tennessee Williams
Edited by Margaret Bradham Thornton
Yale, 856 pp., $40

Numerous photos also of Williams at all ages, even in the nude, of relatives close and distant, of persons he had even the slightest contact with—though not, of course, of the innumerable young men who were his almost nightly (or daily) pickups. Further, photographs of the sundry Williams habitations, including hotels in the many towns he stayed in. Also townscapes and copious reproductions of Williams's rather undistinguished paintings.

If nothing else, they reduce the space for the annotations, which, especially in that diminutive, hard-to-read print, are, however useful, a trifle fulsome. Do we need to know whether some fleeting figure in Tennessee's life supplied his or her name to this or that, often quite minor, character in one of the many stories or plays, some of them unproduced?

Thornton's notes are almost archival rather than merely editorial. Who, one wonders, is this editor of whom we are told only that she is "a writer and independent scholar in Bedminster, New Jersey"? Of the writer, we know nothing further; of the independent scholar, we get rather too much. Life must be very uneventful in Bedmin-

John Simon writes about theater for Bloomberg News.

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ster, and heaven only knows how many years of it she expended on this mammoth project.

In other words, unless you are an independent Williams scholar, or a rabid fan, you may want to read the book selectively. You certainly get Williams warts and all, with him supplying the warts and Thornton the all. Fortunately, some of the pictures crowding the note pages overflow into the text pages, thus shortening those as well. Even more fortunately, although Williams's life dates are 1911 to 1983, the notebooks cover only 1936 to 1981, and feature a hefty lacuna from 1958 to 1979, for which years no journals have been found. As Dr. Johnson delicately observed about *Paradise Lost*, "None ever wished it longer than it is."

What do we get here? Williams suffered from some real ailments, but still more from psychological and hypochondriacal ones. The notebooks are full of detailed aches and pains, his fears of going mad like his beloved sister Rose, and dread of imminent death thanks to a bad heart, which in fact he didn't have.

Next, paranoia. He saw enemies everywhere, sometimes even in his close friends, including Audrey Wood, his devoted agent, who performed wonders for him. "I'm a lonely person," he writes, "lonelier than most people. I have a touch of schizophrenia in me and in order to avoid madness I have to work." And he did toil like a madman, usually on several works simultaneously. When, however, he was blocked, he also loafed like a lunatic, bemoaning his inability to work.

There is also dromomania, Williams's inability to stay put anywhere for long. We find him ceaselessly traveling in search of renewal to various parts of Italy and Spain, to Paris and Vienna, to Mexico and North Africa, more rarely to Scandinavia and Germany. His chief American hangouts were in New York, New Orleans, and Key West, but he also spent time with his family in St. Louis and on trips to Los Angeles and San Francisco.

In Key West he eventually owned a house; everywhere else he kept changing addresses like shirts, if not more often. Thornton produces pictures of even his least abiding abodes. As he writes during a 1936 stay in St. Louis:

> Now I'm back "home." Which isn't quite true. . . . The whole world is really my home—not my single cramped unhappy place. . . . I hate brick and concrete and the hissing of garden hoses. I hate streets with demure or sedate little trees and the awful screech of trolley wheels and polite, constrained city voices. I want hills and valleys and lakes and forests around me! I want to lie dreaming and naked in the sun! I want to be free and have freedom all around me. I don't want anything tight or limiting or strained.

In the fall of 1937 he takes stock:

> My virtues—I am kind, friendly, modest, sympathetic, tolerant and sensitive—
>
> Faults—I am ego-centric, introspective, morbid, sensual, irreligious, lazy, timid, cowardly—
>
> But if I were God I would feel a little bit sorry for Tom Williams [he was not yet Tennessee] once in a while—he doesn't have a very ["gay" crossed out—what irony!] easy time of it and he does have guts of a sort even though he is a stinking sissy!

Thornton is to be commended for reproducing Williams's shaky grammar, crossed-out words, frequent but often faulty forays into foreign languages (e.g., *Bon nuit*), and ubiquitous, spectacular misspellings. Over and over he butchers even the names of persons and places close to him, such as his agency ("Leibling" for Liebling Wood) or his recurrent Roman address ("Via Venuto" for Veneto). He makes up words out of ignorance, not inventiveness: devigation, punity, quotidinal, imbecilics, etc.

He was also an erotomaniac. His proclaimed only-true-love for, and longtime relationship with, Frank Merlo (nicknamed Little Horse by him for his long teeth), an up-and-down affair to shame a rollercoaster, did not preclude his customary nocturnal forays into designated pickup streets and bars for one-night stands. Sometimes he picked up two at once, or shared one with a homosexual friend.

On June 22, 1941, he notes:

> I do not suffer much. I have diverted myself with the most extraordinary amount of sexual license I have ever indulged in. New lover every night, barely missing one, for a month or more. I love no one. [By October:] Love life resumed with a vengeance last night—2 in the night, 1 in the morning. Enjoyed it the first couple. Then a bit sordid. The blue devils [his name for attacks of depression] sort of squatted dumbly at the foot of the stairs as it were.

There follows this reflection:

> Love is what makes it still seem nice after the orgasm. This is when sex becomes an art. . . . one must be an artist to keep it from falling to pieces uglily—Up till then it is simply craftsmanship of a pretty crude and simple kind.

Thus with the steadier lovers; the overnight ones were unceremoniously dismissed. Tennessee liked to refer to these sexual bouts as "nightingales singing." Sometimes they would even "concertize." And he dutifully records whether the nightingale song was good, bad, somewhere in between, or, exceptionally, outstanding. Occasionally he comments on the faces or bodies of his partners; more rarely on the exact nature of the sexual acts.

In April 1938 he ruminated about his only consummated heterosexual episode:

> [A] passionate physical love affair for a few months—(last winter)—it ended very badly—I was thrown over by the beloved bitch [a fellow student at the University of Iowa]—but the experience was valuable.

In June it is, "Wish I could get things started again with Bette." Then nothing more about sex with women until this reflection in 1949: "Perhaps only a woman could love me, but I can't love a woman. Not now. It's too late."

The first—bad—encounter with homosexuality came 10 years earlier: "Rather horrible night with a picked up acquaintance Doug whose amorous advance made me sick at the stomach—Purity—Oh God—It's dangerous to have ideals." Successful homosexual experiences followed fairly soon, but ambivalence sometimes dogged him: "I demand of life some violence

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Bettmann / Corbis

Paul Newman, Elizabeth Taylor in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof *(1958)*

even when I run to peace." And again: "I'd like to live a simple life—with epic fornications." As late as 1953 he is bothered by bought sex: "The whole thing is offensive to the inextinguishable Puritan in me still."

The biggest and most valuable part of *Notebooks* concerns Williams's struggle with his work, which often came very hard. There were years of sporadic publications of stories, poems, and one-act plays. But this and an occasional minor prize or subsidy were as nothing compared with the rejections upon rejections. There were, to be sure, teachers, friends, and theatrical folk who encouraged Tom, but finally it was his dogged perseverance, his stubborn efforts, that prevailed. The steady rewritings and re-rewritings, the false starts and major revisions, make fascinating reading, but unfortunately cannot be conveyed through brief, quotable passages.

There were setbacks for every slender success, and frequent faltering and rebounding. Take this, from 1953:

> Sometimes when I read the work over it seems like the work of a lunatic or drunkard, at best the second. But each time I recover my blind hope or faith and go again the next day.

Repeatedly, he concludes with his optimistic motto: *En avant!* Then there are the absorbing accounts of relations with agents, producers, directors—even Hollywood, where an attempt at a screenplay for Lana Turner bombed.

After several disheartening near-breakthroughs, success finally came with *The Glass Menagerie*. But even a string of successes couldn't guarantee smooth sailing. "I don't get along with normal men," he complains; but luckily for him, there weren't too many of those in the theater. Particularly interesting is the well-documented relationship with Elia Kazan, whose directorial talent and commercial sense helped put Williams across, even if sometimes at the cost of loss in art.

We learn about Williams's taste in writers. His perennial favorites were Chekhov and Hart Crane, sometimes joined by Lawrence, Kafka, Strindberg, Proust, and Joyce. But there was mutability. So *Sons and Lovers* had to yield to *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (misspelled as "Chatterly") as Lawrence's best on June 24, 1955. Two days later, however, "Lady C. bores me this time."

A constant thread running through the journals, besides alcohol, is the steady ingestion of drugs, both medicinal and hallucinogenic. Among the sundry barbiturates, Seconal takes pride of place, as remedy for both insomnia and fear of flying, which Tennessee never quite conquered. There were flights when Seconal had to be seconded by alcohol, though even this wasn't always palliative enough.

Some close friendships enliven the journals, although they sometimes crumbled, as did the ones with his fellow writers Paul Bowles and Donald Windham. The latter, an early Williams lover and collaborator on the Lawrence-based play *You Touched Me!*, elicited Tennessee's wrath by publishing their correspondence with an unpleasant afterword. Whereupon he becomes "my old friend Donald Windham, a consummate liar and betrayer in his dealings with me."

Two great friendships with women proved steadfast: With the married Marion Vaccaro, even if he misspelled her as "Marian," and with the Russian-born British actress Maria Britneva, later, by marriage, Lady St. Just, and, after his death, Williams's literary executrix. No less lasting were the misspellings; thus one of the late plays, *Kirche, Kutchen und Kinder,* never got the error in its title corrected: The German for kitchen is *Küche*, not "Kutchen."

Critics provided some dependable bugbears, chiefly George Jean Nathan, Robert Brustein, and I. So, in a very late diary entry, Tennessee declares, "I recognize them as potential assassins, before, now, and later." Thornton quotes some of my late, unfavorable

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reviews, but not my enthusiastic ones for the vastly superior earlier plays.

The writing in the *Notebooks* is generally quite mundane, not meant for publication. Even so, there are bright, witty, and even lyrical passages, as when Tennessee feels like "a piece of toast forgotten in the toaster," or remarks, "I think I have discovered my first grey hair, but hope it is just a blond one."

My own contact with Tennessee Williams came about when he gave a talk—really just a Q & A—at Harvard and was asked what he thought about existentialism, then all the rage. He said he knew little about it, but maybe someone in the audience could enlighten him. A brash graduate student, I volunteered, which later earned me an invitation to lunch at his hotel, the Ritz Carlton. He received me in his pajamas, and I, becoming suspicious, talked about nothing but women.

What struck me most about the great man was the triteness of his conversation, as it also did Kenneth Tynan during a long interview: "He says nothing that is not candid and little that is not trite." Our lunch was on a frigid Armistice Day, and Tennessee, seeing through the window soldiers shivering atop armored vehicles waiting to join the parade, observed, "Those poor boys, they must be cold as a witch's teat." Raving to me about Greta Garbo, he remarked, "She seemed to be walking on air." Many years later, when his genius had forsaken him, he sat at a restaurant table next to mine and, understandably not recognizing me, leaned over to ask what time it was. I resisted saying, "Later than you might think."

Let me not shortchange him. For a man who had known extreme poverty, sometimes going hungry ("I have exactly one dime—and that borrowed"), often forced to take menial jobs (anything from work on a pigeon ranch—"killed and picked sixty squabs yesterday"—to getting promptly fired as an elevator operator), he did not, having become affluent, prove stingy to others, as many do. He was generous to all, and spent lavishly on good life-long care for his beloved institutionalized sister.

Toward the end, days darkened with premonition. In a letter to a woman friend, he wrote, "I don't understand my life, past or present, nor do I understand life itself. Death seems more comprehensible to me." That was on May 31, 1982. On February 25, 1983, he was found dead, asphyxiated by mistakenly swallowing in the night the small, bell-shaped plastic cap of an eye-drop bottle.

I remember him gratefully for the pleasure his best works have given me. And sometimes with melancholy, when I listen to Alban Berg's *Seven Early Songs*, one of them the setting of a poem by Theodor Storm, which, in translation, begins, "It happens that the nightingale / Has sung the whole night through," and ends, "From its sweet sound / Echoing and re-echoing, / The roses have burgeoned."

What beauty Williams was able to cull from his messy life. ♦

Spartan Sacrifice

Why do we remember the Battle of Thermopylae?

BY SONNY BUNCH

One of the key moments in Herodotus' chronicle of the Persian wars comes at the narrow mountain passage of Thermopylae. Hopelessly outnumbered, but never outclassed, 300 Spartans led a contingent of Greeks in defense of the pass for three hellish days, beating back wave after wave of their "barbaric" Persian enemy from the East. The military engagement was little more than a holding action so the Greeks could assemble a full army further south, and the majority of the Hellenes treated it as such. When their position was no longer tenable, only the Spartans (and a group of Thespians and Thebans) remained. All were killed. Yet this battle is considered one of the finest hours in Greek history. Why?

Thermopylae
The Battle that Changed the World
by Paul Cartledge
Overlook, 376 pp., $30

Led by their king, Leonidas, the Spartans knew they were marching to their death from the moment they left home. A force of 300 against a legendary army of millions, the Spartans knew that whatever allies they could rally in their march from Laconia to the natural chokepoint of Thermopylae would not be enough. Instead of fighting to win, the Spartans were merely fighting for time. Forbidden by religious obligations to field an army during the festival of the Carneia, the polity would not commit its full fighting force to the battlefield until the celebration was over.

Picking up troops during the march, the Spartans arrive with almost 6,000 additional hoplites. While the larger Greek force assembled, the Spartans and their allies faced certain death—and held it off for two days. Thousands of poorly equipped Persians crashed upon the bronze shields and sharp spears of the hoplite wall in front of them. The great Persian king Xerxes watched the battle from afar, and Herodotus reports that "in the course of the attacks three times, in terror for his army, he leapt to his feet." After two days of grueling combat, the Greeks were betrayed by a villager named Ephialtes, who showed the Persians a hidden trail behind the Spartan line.

Knowing their position was no longer viable, Leonidas dismissed his allies. Though accompanied by almost

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Art Resource NY / Erich Lessing

'Leonidas at the Thermopylae' (1814) by Jacques Louis David

a thousand fellow Greeks, the Spartan 300 came to symbolize the suicidal stand that comprised the third and final day of the battle. Surrounded and armed with blunted swords and broken spears, the Greeks fought to their dying breaths, according to Herodotus: "Here they resisted to the last, with their swords, if they had them, and if not, with their hands and teeth, until the Persians ... inally overwhelmed them with missile weapons." The Spartans died to the last man, and Leonidas' body was mutilated by the Persians.

In all, the battle occupies only six pages or so in the English translation of Herodotus' *Histories*. Paul Cartledge has taken this brief account and expanded it into 300-plus pages of exposition and analysis. Written for the layman, *Thermopylae: The Battle that Changed the World* is an accessible introduction to the Greek stand at the Hot Gates. And with *300*, a popular movie based on the events of 480 B.C. currently in theaters, now is as good a time as any for complacent Western audiences to reacquaint themselves with the history behind this 2,500-year-old sacrifice.

Thermopylae makes a good companion to Herodotus. Cartledge explains what, exactly, a hoplite was and how he was armored: "His shield was the single most crucial element of a hoplite's armour, since it was rightly said to be worn for the good of the line as a whole as much as, or rather than, for the benefit of the individual wearer. It was this item above all that made a hoplite a hoplite, a close-order phalanx fighter." While you get a sense of how a hoplite functions, a little more detail would have been nice: The mash of bodies, the intense physical struggle, the sheer brutality of hand-to-hand, shield-to-shield combat is something we cannot imagine in today's warfare of smart bombs and sniper rifles. (For a colorful description of what fighting in the ancient Greek world was like, the most colorful modern source remains Victor Davis Hanson's *The Western Way of War*.)

Where Cartledge is better is in his deconstruction of Herodotus' claim that the Persian army was nearly 1.7 million troops strong. Indeed, "Herodotus gives even higher figures," Cartledge writes, "such that the total number on the march with Xerxes numbered over five million souls—5,283,220 to be (im)precise!"

These numbers are clearly exaggerated, and Cartledge notes that "there is not a single professional historian today who believes in the accuracy of Herodotus's reported figures." Cartledge suggests this exaggeration was caused by Herodotus comparing Greeks and Persians "as if to imply that size was not everything" and that "any serious reduction [in the Persian force] would have the effect of putting the Greek coalition's achievement in a somewhat different light, and that, I suspect, is one of the major reasons why Herodotus was so keen to maximize the enemy numbers."

This explanation is somewhat different from the one that Ernle Bradford gave in his excellent *Thermopylae: The Battle for the West*. He suggests that Herodotus was not intentionally misleading readers; rather, he mistook the Persian word *myriarchs* (defined as a "commander of 10,000 men") for other commanders who had smaller numbers of troops. Because the Persians used the decimal system, explains Bradford, "If one removes a nought from all of Herodotus's figures one comes up with an army of 170,000 infantrymen. This seems a far more likely figure in view of the populations (as far as they can be conjectured) at the time."

Regardless of Herodotus' reason for

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increasing the Persian troop count, the effect was the same: It made the Spartan feat that much more amazing. But was this really, as Cartledge puts it, the Battle that Changed the World? Was this holding action really more important than the encounter that followed it, a rousing victory for the Greeks over the Persians at Plataea? Perhaps the Spartan sacrifice had inspired the Greeks to fight more ferociously at Plataea; but even without the Spartan example at Thermopylae, the Greeks would have fielded the full Spartan force (some 6,000 strong) along with the armies of the rest of the Greek city-states (another 100,000 or so troops) at Plataea. Combining those numbers with their superior technology, the Greeks would still have easily outclassed their Persian enemies.

Then again, perhaps the most important battle was neither of these land engagements. Maybe it was the Battle of Salamis, which occurred between Thermopylae and Plataea, in which the Greek navy routed Xerxes' fleet, destroying some 200 ships, while losing only 40 Greek vessels. Without naval supremacy, Xerxes was unable to supply his troops or defend the bridge he had constructed to carry his men into Greece. As such, he declared a hasty retreat, leaving a (still very large) force in Greece to hold what he had captured.

Cartledge's primary contribution to the Thermopylae narrative is his examination of the actions of the 300 Spartans in a modern, post-9/11, light. It is difficult to compare the Spartans to anybody in the war on terror. Though prepared to die for their cause, the Greeks were fighting against an enemy combatant, not killing civilians. And comparing the 300 to modern Westerners is not quite right, either: As Cartledge points out, "For most Westerners the point of war is to win—and survive." He also highlights one major difference between Americans of today and Spartans of yesteryear, suggesting that "the support of the American public for war, and especially the war in Iraq, was conditional on [President Bush's] demanding only little of that great public. The contrast with Sparta in 480 B.C.E. could not be starker." ♦

The Klavan File

A novelist of values in the Age of Terror.

BY JOEL SCHWARTZ

Andrew Klavan is a prolific crime novelist and screenwriter, author of about 20 novels (some pseudonymous). He is also a conservative, as is evident in a January op-ed that he wrote for the *Los Angeles Times*, criticizing Hollywood for not making films about the war against Islamist terror:

> In the history of our time as told by the movies, the war on terror largely does not exist. Which is passing strange, you know. Because the war on terror *is* the history of our time. The outcome of our battle against the demographic, political and military upsurge of a hateful theology and its oppressive political vision will determine the fate of freedom in this century.

To tell that story, Klavan noted, filmmakers would "have to depict right-minded Americans—some of whom may be white and male and Christian—hunting down and killing dark-skinned villains of a false and wicked creed. That's what's happening, on a good day anyway, so that's what you'd have to show." But Hollywood is reluctant to celebrate that combat, for fear that doing so "might appear bigoted and jingoistic." In short, "we can't bring ourselves to fictionalize the larger idea: Islamo-fascism is an evil and American liberty a good."

Klavan concluded by lamenting Hollywood's unwillingness to "dramatize the central event of our time" and to pay tribute to the "lawmen and warriors" who protect us.

Klavan's column, along with some other nonfiction writing of his, is available at his website. Here we learn that Klavan is a religious believer: "I became a Christian after some 35 years of thinking and reading everything I could get my hands on from Augustine to Zoroaster. Which is to say, for a non-scholarly layman, I know my stuff pretty well." In addition, he rejects the contemporary understanding of "realism" because it ignores the human capacity for heroism: "Mean streets are realistic; so are unhappy endings. . . . Heroism and uplifting faith are not. . . . Yet, there is nothing unreal about a man turning to God and finding courage and guidance; about a man deciding to fight, and even to die, for a greater good."

The issues of religion and heroism are also addressed in Klavan's three most recent books, which together constitute a trilogy of semiautobiographical detective novels: *Dynamite Road* (2003), *Shotgun Alley* (2004), and *Damnation Street* (2006). These novels, which Klavan describes as a "fictionalized memoir," serve in effect as his *Bildungsroman*, explaining how he came to his current opinions. In brief, he seems to have come to religion and the need for heroism by reacting against pernicious doctrines that are frequently espoused in American universities.

The novels are narrated by a stand-in for Klavan—a young man, born and raised in the Northeast, who went to college at Berkeley and wants to become a writer. Shortly after graduating, the narrator takes a job at a San Francisco detective agency, Weiss Investigations. While there he falls in love with the daughter of a novelist who teaches in the Berkeley English department.

In many of these particulars the narrator resembles the author, who was

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born in New York City, grew up on Long Island, graduated from Berkeley, and married the daughter of Thomas Flanagan, a Berkeley English professor who wrote three wonderful historical novels about Ireland.

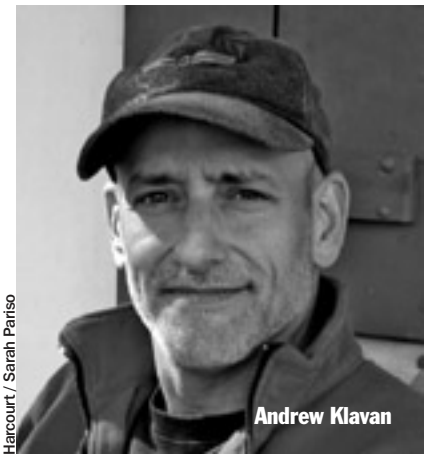
The Klavan-like narrator plays only a minor role in these books, whose true heroes are two older detectives. The agency head is Scott Weiss, a fiftyish ex-cop, with a remarkable capacity to predict people's actions, who "walked through [an] atmosphere of corruption and foolishness and . . . still tried to do good and be kind and act justly." His second-in-command is Jim Bishop, a thirtysomething recipient of a Purple Heart, a Silver Star, and a Distinguished Flying Cross, who is characterized by a "quiet aura of self-assurance," "insane courage in the face of physical danger," and irresistibility to anyone wearing a skirt.

Still, the narrator plays an important secondary role, dealing with clients who are English professors at Berkeley. In one book he expresses his distaste for the radical academic feminism of a character who is clearly based on fanatics like Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin:

> The way I felt, all God's children, male and female, should be free to do whatever they wanted, whatever they could. Smoke, go to medical school, stay home and raise their children, it didn't matter a damn to me what people did. But . . . these ideologues who thought marriage was oppression and sex was rape and men and women should be exactly the same—I'd only just recently escaped from academia, and I knew them well and I hated them. They were bullies and liars. They lied about history and human nature and statistics.

Elsewhere the narrator makes clear that contemporary academic literary theory revolts him. Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," he declares, is "one of the wisest and most beautiful poems." How distressing, then, to encounter a graduate student who tells his colleagues that the poem is simply the "effulgence, or maybe I should say effluvium, of certain social interactions and assumptions." Summarizing the graduate student's argument, the narrator adds that "all these interactions and assumptions were sexist, imperialist, racist, and altogether very, very bad."

Not so long ago, the narrator muses, he too had been "talking nonsense just like [the graduate students] were. Planning, like they were, a career in the academy" by becoming "a college professor with writer's block trying to write novels about college professors with writer's block. . . . The usual drill."


Harcourt / Sarah Pariso

Andrew Klavan

He now realizes, though, that "these people had nothing to do with literature. They had nothing to do with ideas. They were just intellectual vandals, parading a cheap knack for breaking fine things into their component parts." Instead, the narrator decides to "live in the real world with real people and write the kind of novels I had always loved"—that is, "tough-guy books and mystery novels" celebrating the heroism of "detectives and cops and soldiers."

In another subplot the narrator uncovers an underground Christian group at Berkeley, expressing his amazement to one of the participants: "You're an intellectual. We [intellectuals] don't believe in God anymore." His interlocutor reminds him, though, that the beliefs that have replaced Christianity on campus—psychoanalysis, socialism, feminism, multiculturalism, postmodernism—aren't particularly plausible, either:

> I mean, people don't really have Oedipal complexes, not usually anyway, and labor doesn't actually produce capital. Women are born different from men, some cultures are better than others, and on and on. . . . The fact that all these deep convictions . . . turned out to be, you know, just false, made me wonder about the other thing, the God thing.

Since Klavan rightly aims for a readership transcending members of the National Association of Scholars and subscribers to *First Things*, this critique of the contemporary university emerges only from his books' subplots. By contrast, the major plots concern the sorts of villains whom you'd expect to encounter in crime novels, with Weiss and Bishop battling a frighteningly competent contract killer and the pathological leader of an outlaw biker gang.

Ultimately, though, the narrator manages—at least on a small scale—to embody the heroism that Weiss and Bishop display: the heroism admired by him and despised by the contemporary academy. When Weiss is in danger of being attacked by a group of lowlifes, the narrator must decide how to react:

> How can one tell, I inquired philosophically, who is a mere reveler and who is a murderous thug come to beat the living daylights out of one's friend? This is how intellectuals stay out of fistfights. They convince themselves the situation is complex. It's much safer than acknowledging the simple right and wrong of the thing, the need for immediate action. It's safer, but it's not admirable.

So the narrator chooses to act courageously, and is himself beaten up by the lowlifes, as he successfully enables Weiss to escape from his attackers. A fair summary of the narrator's experience at Weiss Investigations is that it teaches him the need to affirm the significance of "the simple right and wrong of [a] thing."

Insisting on right and wrong was the moral basis of Klavan's *Times* piece. *Dynamite Road*, *Shotgun Alley*, and *Damnation Street* together offer a fictional account of the sources of that insistence. ♦

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Earthling's Progress

One man's journey through the environmental movement. **BY WILLIAM F. PEDERSEN**

Between 1970 and 1977, Congress passed a major environmental law every year, and environmental stories regularly led the news. Russell Train served during that period as Richard Nixon's chief environmental adviser and as head of the Environmental Protection Agency. He then joined the World Wildlife Fund, retiring in 1994. He made news most recently in 2004 when, age 84, he campaigned for John Kerry out of disagreement with the Bush administration's environmental policies.

Russell Train was born into the world of East Coast/WASP privilege. The first Train arrived in Massachusetts from England in 1635. Trains suffered at Valley Forge, and fought at Concord, Saratoga, and Antietam. Russell Train's grandfather was an admiral, and his father served as naval aide to Herbert Hoover.

Train was born in Washington in 1920. The family had two full-time servants. They worshiped at Saint John's—the Episcopal church on Lafayette Square—and the Train children were President Hoover's overnight guests at the White House. Russell attended St. Alban's School, like the children of other prominent Washingtonians, then and now. His wife, who brought him a fortune and much else, was a bridesmaid at Jackie Kennedy's first wedding.

As a student at Princeton and Columbia Law School, Train proved universally popular, and academically able but not outstanding. After law school, he stepped off the hereditary path by taking a job at the House Ways and Means Committee, which writes tax legislation, rather than at a law firm. Through good performance, connections, and political skill and diligence, he rose by the age of 37 to a judgeship on the United States Tax Court.

Hunting safaris in Africa changed his life. They fired a desire to preserve African wildlife and its habitat, and led him to found the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation and then work full time for the Conservation Foundation. By 1965 he had become one of America's few full-time environmentalists, and one of the very few Republicans among them. When, a few years later, the environment exploded as a political issue, his path to appointed office lay clear.

Conservative Conservationist
Russell E. Train and the Emergence of American Environmentalism
by J. Brooks Flippen
LSU, 278 pp., $29.95

This biography tells its story well, but misses the opportunity to cast light on such broader issues as how to succeed in government, or the changing political fortunes of environmental protection. The author clearly likes and admires Train, and shares his old-school positions. But in some ways he does not give Train enough credit. Not every able and personable Capitol Hill aide enjoys anything like Train's success. What made the difference?

It seems to have been Train's unfailing and widely recognized ability to work with all kinds of people to solve problems. Why else would President Reagan have appointed Train to the Base Closing and Realignment Commission—a most sensitive assignment—even though Train had publicly criticized Reagan's environmental policies? This book could have used a more detailed description and analysis of these skills.

Grasping the formidable details of environmental regulation was not Train's strength, and it is not a strength of this book. In fairness, during the time of Train's government service, such a grasp was not required: The flaws of many development projects, then newly subjected to environmental analysis, were pretty self-evident, while the regulatory task consisted more in getting the control structure up and running than in refining its operations. But the book would have needed to engage those issues to probe the biggest and most interesting topic raised by Train's career: the transformation (perhaps temporary) of environmentalism from a consensus issue into one split between greens on the left and browns on the right.

Though Russell Train was hardly apolitical, J. Brooks Flippen continually stresses his preference for bipartisan approaches and solutions based on a greener version of the conventional wisdom of post-New Deal Washington. An instinctive centrist, Train had no sympathy with anti-environmentalist conservative Republicanism, and broke with it decisively in opposing the reelection of George W. Bush. But by not addressing this conflict analytically, the book does justice to neither side.

On one side, 1970s-style environmental regulation was bound to produce a backlash. It relied pretty exclusively on detailed regulatory commands issued by the federal government, often without much analytical justification, to tell industry what to do. Once the most immediate and obvious problems had been successfully attacked, this approach proved cumbersome, intrusive on private and state autonomy, unduly expensive, and politically unpopular.

Three decades of experience have taught us how to correct most of these defects. Today's far more sophisticated methods rely on detailed policy analy-

William F. Pedersen, a lawyer in Washington, worked at the EPA when Russell Train was administrator.

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sis to help decide how much pollution to allow. Then the power of the market is harnessed to reduce it by allowing polluters to trade the rights to emit this amount among themselves, as long as they do not exceed the total. Today's thinking also recognizes that some problems are best dealt with at state or local levels, or by voluntary action, or simply by publicizing bad conduct and relying on the marketplace of ideas to correct it.

Conservative Conservationist does not recognize that much of the conservative backlash can be defended as the political side of an effort to put this new framework into place. No one reading it would know that the Bush administration has used this new thinking to require a reduction by two-thirds of the most damaging air pollutants. On the other side, the book does not isolate—and therefore cannot probe—a conservative impulse to oppose not just the means used to pursue environmental protection, but the legitimacy of environmental goals themselves. Russell Train's life would have provided a good platform for analyzing such a mindset. This book, unfortunately, barely names it. ♦

Implant or Animal?

From nose jobs to liposuction, perfection awaits.

BY RACHEL DICARLO

In the decade since she turned 28, Alex Kuczynski has had an eyelift, Botox, collagen treatments, liposuction on her thighs, and a disastrous Restylane injection that inflated her upper lip to the size of a large yam. After the lip-swelling experience, Kuczynski, a reporter for the *New York Times*, abandoned cosmetic surgery for good and wrote *Beauty Junkies*, a droll examination of the modern obsession with cosmetic surgery, its cultural implications, and the horrifying surgical procedures and upkeep some endure in the quest for perfection.

Beauty Junkies
Inside Our $15 Billion Obsession with Cosmetic Surgery
by Alex Kuczynski
Doubleday, 290 pp., $24.95

There's the Upper East Side podiatrist, known as New York's "foot facelift" doctor, who shortens her clients' toes so their feet fit into ultra-skinny Jimmy Choo heels, and injects collagen into their soles so their feet can withstand the brutal pounding of high heels on cement. The podiatrist explains her practice to Kuczynski: "We live in a 15-second culture. That's how long it takes for a man to look at you and decide if he will be in love with you. That's it. And if you're wearing stiletto sandals and your feet look like hell, he's not even going to give you the time of day."

One of Kuczynski's creepiest subjects is Mrs. X in Los Angeles, the wife of an entertainment mogul, whose upkeep "encompasses all her interests: It is her profession, her hobby, passion, and primary relationship." She is a member of the Restylane frequent-user awards program, has her porcelain veneers changed yearly, slathers her skin daily with cow-brain extract, and finds something to be nipped, tucked, or remolded once a year. Among her friends she's considered the norm. She won't give up her age to Kuczynski, but on a good day she might pass for 30—although she has a 33-year-old child from her first marriage.

Some have died on the operating table, including, in a fatal twist of New York irony, novelist Olivia Goldsmith. Goldsmith's book *The First Wives Club* (later made into a movie) exalts a trio of middle-aged women who, Ivana Trump-style, don't get mad but get everything, and derides as vapid and shallow the younger women for whom their husbands leave them. In real life, Goldsmith entered the prestigious Manhattan Eye, Ear, and Throat Hospital for a chin tuck and went into cardiac arrest after receiving the anesthetic. She died instantly.

Then there's the nonsurgical Botox, a purified crystalline form of poison found in spoiled sausage which, when injected into the face, eliminates lines by paralyzing the surrounding muscles. Botox became something of a household word in 2004 when John Kerry was rumored to have used the stuff to smooth out his furrowed brow. Since then, sales have risen $200 million a year. Since 1997, they've increased by 2,446 percent. American women used to host Tupperware parties for their friends or have the Mary Kay lady come by to show them how to put on their makeup in five minutes or less. Now they have "pumping parties" at which a doctor arrives with a bag full of needles and Botox to inject the host and her friends while they sip vodka and gin tonics or some other calorie-free cocktail.

A whole new lexicon has emerged to describe the world of the improvement-obsessed. There's the "carb face," for those faces that show evidence of ingesting bread and sweets; "trout pout," for overfilled lips; and "Kabuki mask," for an over-Botoxed face incapable of showing expression.

Cosmetic surgery is no longer the exclusive privilege and distraction of the wealthy or famous. Radio shock jocks promote contests in which young, female listeners write raunchy letters describing why they deserve breast augmentation. College girls save their money for cheap liposuction. There are cyber-begging websites like *myfreeimplants.com* on which women pose topless in hopes that a benefactor will donate a large sum to their cause. The public adores TV makeover shows

Rachel DiCarlo is a writer in Washington.

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and dramas about plastic surgery such as *The Swan*, *Extreme Makeover*, and *Nip/Tuck*.

Here are some facts presented by Kuczynski: In 2004, 290,343 Americans had excess fat trimmed from their eyelids—up from 229,092 two years before that. (Evidence that women now reject old glamour in the form of the droopy "bedroom eyes" look Marlene Dietrich and Tallulah Bankhead helped bring into vogue.) Liposuction is Americans' favorite procedure. In 2004, 478,251 Americans had fat vacuumed from their bodies—up 111 percent from 1997. Tummy tucks are up 144 percent.

What precipitated this mass consumption? Part of the explanation is supply and demand. The prices of many surgical procedures have plummeted. Ten years ago you would have been hard-pressed to find a doctor to perform liposuction for less than $7,000. Now, a woman can track one down to do the job for $700. Reluctant to deal with stingy insurers, more and more specialists have made cosmetic procedures the centerpiece of their business. What dermatologist wouldn't eschew haggling with insurance companies over payment for treating plantar warts and acne in favor of an all-cash Botox and liposuction business? A $500 vial of Botox, which takes 15 minutes to inject, brings in more than $3,000 in revenue while delicately removing a freckle might only generate $12 from the insurance company. Similarly, why would a dentist want to make a living treating gingivitis and canker sores if he can bring in $30,000 cash capping one woman's teeth?

Cosmetic surgery has become so lucrative that everyone wants in. In California last year a group of oral surgeons and dentists, though they hold dental degrees and not MDs, successfully lobbied the legislature for licenses to perform facelifts, nose jobs, breast implants, and liposuction. (Governor Schwarzenegger, a sometime consumer of cosmetic enhancements, vetoed the bill.)

Then there are the Baby Boomers who, having reached middle age, are more transfixed with the idea of staying young than any preceding generation. They formed their identities alongside the watershed events of their youth, and many see preserving a youthful appearance as a way of preserving their identity. They also know that one of the factors in professional success is a thin, attractive, youthful appearance. Study after study shows that pulchritude counts in professions it shouldn't: Good-looking teachers, stockbrokers, artists, engineers, and mechanics earn more in their lifetimes than their homely counterparts.

The other half of the equation is pornography. The mainstreaming of pornographic images in everyday life has changed the way women, especially young women, see themselves. Male aesthetic preferences are based, to some degree, on pornography or images derived from pornography, such as lingerie catalogues, comic books, and video games. How else to explain MTV's *Real Life: Plastic Surgery*, where "girls want to look like Pamela Anderson, not Kate Moss?" If men universally rejected fake body parts, women wouldn't want them.

Then again, as Kuczynski suggests, maybe cosmetic surgery is the new feminism. Being perfectly sculpted and styled from head to toe is just one more way of having it all. Successful women in, say, New York, where every sidewalk is a runway, might feel compelled to meet both male and female standards of achievement: power in the workplace, in addition to being thin, smooth-skinned, and perfectly coiffed and made up. Now more women than ever can strive to earn like Heidi Miller (CEO of treasury and securities services at JP Morgan Chase) and look like Heidi Klum. Whether such a combination spells happiness is another matter. ♦

Clifford and Howard

Before Melvin Dummar, there was Clifford Irving.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The Hoax is a hoax, and that's one of its many pleasures. This new Richard Gere movie purports to tell the true story of the not-very-successful novelist Clifford Irving and his notorious 1972 attempt to convince McGraw Hill, Time Inc., and the entire world that he was the authorized ghostwriter of the autobiography of Howard Hughes—a person who was then *still alive*, if not very well, somewhere in the Western Hemisphere, and who blew the whistle on Irving the moment the book was published.

The Hoax
Directed by Lasse Hallström

The central character of *The Hoax* is named Clifford Irving, and the 57-year-old Gere is even made up to resemble the then-41-year-old-Irving (complete with delightful early-'70s sideburns). But the resemblance to the real man ends there. Screenwriter William Wheeler and director Lasse Hallström have taken many of the details laid out in Irving's own memoir (also titled *The Hoax*) and fictionalized them wherever and whenever they find it convenient.

The actual Clifford Irving is a classic, now vanished, American type—an Upper West Side Jew playing at being a citizen of the world, escaping the drab bourgeois nightmare of the United

John Podhoretz, a columnist for the New York Post, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD'S *movie critic.*

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States to live the glamorous but weirdly seedy life of a literary expatriate smack dab in the middle of the Mediterranean. At the time of the hoax, Irving was a resident of the island of Ibiza, had many marriages and children scattered across the globe, and was conducting a tortured, long-term affair with a gorgeous but not very talented Danish pop singer who was married into nobility if not into riches.

In his own memoir of the events, very much worth reading, Irving says he ginned up the idea as a comic stunt, just to see how far he could get with it. Along the way, a series of astonishing coincidences made the project ever more viable, until he began to fantasize that he could really get away with it. He became inordinately proud of the book he produced and remains so (you can buy it online at his website). He believed that he had somehow managed to uncover the deep truth about Howard Hughes—even though he never met the man, and invented most of the anecdotes he relates in the course of the book. It's the weirdest example of literary vanity in our time, and only the overwhelming power of vanity can explain Irving's heedless rush toward self-destruction.

Gere's Irving is a literary hustler, a man entering middle age still trying to hit it big by writing polished imitations of successful novels. As the movie begins, he is attempting to sell his publisher on a novel entitled *Rudnick's Problem*, to be published only two years after *Portnoy's Complaint*. Premature praise from his editor leads Irving to go out and buy himself a Mercedes convertible even as his furniture is being repossessed from his Westchester County home. Then the novel is rejected, and he's stuck with the car and no sofa. He and his schlubby, gregarious, even more desperately unsuccessful writer friend Dick Suskind (Alfred Molina) concoct a screwy scheme to squeeze some money out of Irving's publisher by showing off a few letters with a forged Howard Hughes signature that claim Hughes has chosen Irving as his authorial vessel. Suskind, Irving's partner-in-crime, is passed off as his research assistant.

Miramax Films

Richard Gere

Irving reckons that Hughes will never sue them because he's too crazy by this point to know that anything might be going on, and in any case, he can't set foot in an American courtroom without being subject to a $137 million judgment by the shareholders of TWA. And so Irving and Suskind are off and running. They spin tales about meeting with Hughes in Mexico, where Hughes hands out organic prunes.

"The more outrageous I sound," Irving notes, "the more believable I sound."

They succeed in purloining a tell-all manuscript about Hughes by his longtime second-in-command. (A wonderful scene has Suskind at some prehistoric version of Kinko's making Xerox copies of a huge pile of paper one sheet at a time, since copier feeders had not yet been invented.) And they are flummoxed when, out of nowhere, comes word that yet another writer is claiming to be the ghostwriter of a Hughes autobiography.

"It's a hoax!" Irving cries, so deep into his own fake portrait of the man that he has the nerve to be outraged by this infamy.

The Hoax gets into some silliness near the end about how the Irving book may have led to the Watergate break-in the following June, but otherwise it's a refreshing piece of work—a deftly written, sharply observed social comedy about how some very august and pompous institutions were snookered in part because of their own prideful assurance that no one would ever dare to try and put one over on them. You want Irving and Suskind to get away with it even though you know they're not going to.

Richard Gere is not a great actor by any means, but he tears into the part as though it were a birthday present, and his sheer ferocity carries the day. His costar, Alfred Molina, is a great actor by any definition, and his amusing, soulful performance as a loser who knows he's a loser gives the movie a heart as well as a brain.

Clifford Irving has been complaining about the movie's inaccuracies; but then, what standing does a man who served a couple of years in prison for perpetrating a preposterous fraud have to whine about people who take liberties with the truth? His unhappiness with *The Hoax* is lagniappe—the perfect conclusion to his ludicrous life story. ♦

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"The White House wants to appoint a high-powered czar to oversee the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with authority to issue directions to the Pentagon, the State Department and other agencies, but it has had trouble finding anyone able and willing to take the job, according to people close to the situation." —Washington Post, *April 11, 2007*

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esday, April 18, 2007

White House Selects Gergen as War 'Czar'

Eminent Harvard Professor Has Served Four Presidents

By Peter Baker and Thomas E. Ricks
Washington Post Staff Writers

Political commentator, editor, best-selling author, former White House confidant to four presidents, and Harvard professor of public service David Gergen has accepted a newly created position in the Bush administration: Supreme Czar Maximus of All U.S. Forces at War and Peace. The title was suggested by Mr. Gergen and was a condition for his taking the job. A White House official, speaking on background because of the sensitivity of the appointment, told the Post that the President initially wanted Clark Clifford for the position but was informed circumstances prevented his acceptance.

When asked why Gergen was selected, White House spokeswoman Dana Perino likened Mr. Gergen to Mikey from the Life cereal commercials, saying, "Give it to Gergen. He'll try anything."

In fact, Mr. Gergen was seen last week on "Hollywood Squares" (in the Center Square) and co-

Sources in the administration explained that the requirements for getting Mr. Gergen on board were minimal considering the expertise and political finesse he brings to the position. Those requirements, besides the title, include a horse-drawn carriage, flowing cape, and a field marshal's baton with inlaid precious gems.

The Post was unable to reach the Supreme Czar Maximus of All U.S. Forces at War and Peace for comment. His assistant said an official press briefing will be held in June, following the publication of his latest memoir, "Supreme Being." The White House also agreed to postpone Mr. Gergen's start date as Supreme Czar Maximus until after the completion of the Latin American leg of his book tour. He will

See LINE OF SUCCESSION, *A7, Col. 1*

Petraeus: Surrender Or Face Sanjaya

By Robin Wright
Washington Post Staff Writer

BAGHDAD, April 17 — Over a thousand members of the Mahdi Army took to the streets this afternoon, some shrieking in terror, others weeping, after hearing news that American Idol "singer" Sanjaya would be coming to Baghdad if Moktada al-Sadr did not surrender.

Available by satellite, the amateur singing com

and the Americans are really serious this time!" exclaimed one Mahdi fighter.

Calling it the "final option," General David Petraeus, U.S. commander in Iraq, first described the decision as "not an easy one," adding later that "it is necessary in war to make use of all means available to subdue the enemy—even those that may seem inhumane." Similarly, in 2004, Justin Guarini was

the weekly Standard

April 23, 2007

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